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The Cresset (Vol. 3, No. 7)

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MAY 1940

THE CRESSET

And Now Scandinavia

Summer Reading

The Piano Returns

The Motion Picture

Bertrand Russell

Check List of Books Reviewed

A REVIEW OF LITERATURE, THE ARTS, AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

VOL. 3 NO. 7

Twenty-five Cents

The CRESSET

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Volume 3 MAY, 1940 Number 7

THE CRESSET

A REVIEW OF LITERATURE, THE ARTS, AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

NOTES and COMMENT

And Now Scandinavia—Summer Reading—Radio: 1939-40—No Sale—Benito's Dilemma—The Piano Returns—Hamlet Complete—and others.

By THE EDITORS

And Now Scandinavia

AS THIS is written Allied and Nazi troops are engaged in open warfare in the hills of Norway. The Nazi troops are using the deploying tactics which were so successful in Poland. German transports are reported to be moving up the Swedish coast. Before this issue of THE CRESSET reaches our readers Sweden may be involved.

It is a confusing and terrifying picture. Although the sequence of events is not always clear, it is evident that German ships were moving up the Norwegian coast before the Allies began their mine laying activities in Norwegian waters. Berlin's official explanation that they feared an Allied invasion of Norway is blatant nonsense. The act of the Nazi leaders in overrunning Denmark and Norway is to be condemned as downright immoral. Perhaps even more significant is the revelation of internal treason in Norway which made the Nazi "Putsch" possible. It is another example of the immoral dynamism of the Nazi leadership. Information concerning the progress of what may well be a crisis in European affairs is offered by the daily press. We can only express our profound sympathy to the Scandinavian peoples. Peaceful, socially progressive, and thoroughly Christian, they have been caught in the jaws of the evil thing which is now stalking the world.

Summer Reading

IT HAD to come. Now the University of Chicago is telling us how to acquire a liberal education through reading. Not officially, of course: but Mortimer J. Adler is as near to being the voice of the university as any man. Don't get us wrong. We're not disparaging Dr. Adler's efforts to show people how to read a book. Goodness knows, we know dozens of people who read a book and never do discover what the score is. Even we ourselves, as profound as we may sound at times, have never held sustained attention through James Joyce or some of the vagaries of Ezra Pound. After reading Adler's *How to Read a Book,* we re-read some of the more recent lucubrations in *Transition* and *Mein Kampf* and began to understand.

To get down to fundamentals: We think, what with summer coming on and the usual pap about summer reading in the publishers' advertisements, we ought to master Adler and then tackle some sound stuff right at the time when the honeysuckle is the prettiest and the bees sound the drowsiest. Dr. Adler says that every good book deserves to be read three times: once for analysis, the second and third times for interpretation and evaluation. He shows the difference between passive and active reading (you can take your choice) and indicates which type is the better on certain occasions.

This summer we're actually going to shun those froth-and-film things, all those murder stories, and every book on the American scene. We have stacked up Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica,* J. B. Bury's *History of Greece,* Boswell's *Life of Johnson.* That's just a beginning. By next winter, dear reader, you will be running across all kinds of references in these columns to books we read in the summer.

Radio: 1939-40

AT THIS time it's customary to offer a brief survey of the different events of the past season in the amusement world. We'll save the movies and the theater for another time. The 1939-40 season of the radio closed a while ago. True, the radio continues to gasp out programs but the heart is gone. It is, we needn't insist too harshly, a thankless task to survey the offerings of America's laxative and refrigerator manufacturers because they're so very impermanent: here one minute, gone the next twist of the dial or push of the button.

We note an increase of quiz programs, but *Information Please*

is still the best. The other quiz programs are feeble imitations and disheartening demonstrations of the dismally low national intelligence quotient. Boogie-woogie music and soap-powder dramas continue to the detriment of our noble country. The usual mouthwash propaganda flows nightly through the radios of the nation. It's a dismal prospect.

If we were to make a list of the outstanding secular radio programs of the past season, we would include the following:

America's Town Meeting of the Air
The New York Philharmonic Concerts
The Metropolitan Opera Broadcasts
Charlie McCarthy
Fred Allen
Edward Weeks
Information Please
Alec Templeton

The unique program of the season was Alec Templeton's half hour with piano and orchestra. We recall with unashamed delight his burlesque of Walter Damrosch, of a Gilbert and Sullivan operetta, and an amazing travesty on a Bach fugue.

There was nothing startlingly new in the past season. The exception, of course, was the news broadcasting, particularly the dramatic account of the sinking of the *Graf Spee*. If news is amusing, then one would have to eliminate one or the other of the above items. At a later time the news commentators will be analyzed. The final impression gained from the past radio season is that radio is marking time until the appearance of television. It is becoming more and more apparent that radio is still an incomplete means of communication.

No Sale

WHEN the European war was declared, many good Americans expected that the American market would straightway experience a golden avalanche of orders for all manner of supplies. Some could not wait to realize on their expectations. This humble scribe's butcher, in the first days of September, blandly charged him 45 cents a pound for steak cut from an amazingly antique ox and ceased, in consequence, to be his butcher. But the expected vast orders from Europe did not come and, after seven months of war, show no signs of coming. *Fortune* has thoroughly studied the situation and reported on it. French agents, since the start of the war, have placed orders here for $300,000,000, and the British for $138,000,000. Almost all of this is being spent on aircraft and ma-

chine tools; only a small fraction on other items. British and French agents talk vaguely of huge potential requirements in ammunition, machine guns, and the like, but they do not get beyond talking. They show no interest in food supplies, cotton, metal, and other raw materials, or in shoes, woolen goods, locomotives, chemicals, and other manufactured goods that were in such demand during the last war. This situation is, no doubt, to be explained in part by the fact that there has been time to prepare for this war, partly by the curious character of the hostilities so far, and partly by the efforts of the Allies to draw on their colonies and dependencies to the greatest possible extent. The demand for machine tools is, however, interesting. *Fortune* says, "That the British, in view of their own large machine-tool capacity, should be in the market at all must be confusing to laymen. The industry's private conclusion is that the British are playing a double game: they are paying a premium to let U. S. industry supply tools for their expanding aircraft and munitions industry while they concentrate the British capacity on holding their foreign trade" and on appropriating as much of the former German trade as they can.

Benito's Dilemma

THE world is still wondering what Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini said to each other when they met at the Brenner Pass six weeks ago. Now we hear that the *Führer* and Comrade Stalin will have a powwow. The grapevine has it that the two kingpins of pressure-politics will meet in the city of Lwow. It is certain that they will have an interesting discussion. But what will they decide? Will they divide the Balkans into zones of influence and exploitation? Will Mussolini be represented?

Pertinax, the shrewd French commentator on world affairs, has recently hinted that Italy is about to assume an attitude toward the war radically different from the rôle of non-belligerency. Will she cast her lot with Germany and Russia, or will she play ball with France and Britain? We cannot give an answer at present; but we need not hesitate to predict that *Il Duce* will watch the wind-currents very, very carefully before he jumps. He will try to pick the winner. If he considers it advantageous to uphold the Rome-Berlin Axis, he will snub the Allies. If the trend of events convinces him that a Rome-Berlin-Moscow Axis will aid him in restoring the grandeur that once was Rome, he will be doubly eager to put thorns into the flesh of Britain and

France. But if Benito's reason shows him that a close association with Berlin and Moscow cannot help his cause, he will politely tell Adolf and Josef to take a nosedive into the Baltic.

Il Duce is a realist. It would be rash to predict what he will do; but, we, for our part, suspect that he will pay a great deal of attention to the Vatican before he reaches a decision. The Pope, you know, is not on the side of the conquerors of Poland.

The Piano Returns

THE piano has come back. A short time ago, when the locusts of the depression were holding high carnival, we thought that the fine instrument had begun to go the way of all flesh. We wondered whether homes would ever again resound with the rotund and fulsome phrases of *The Maiden's Prayer, The Storm, The Battle of Waterloo, Robin's Return, Ben Hur's Chariot Race,* or *Old Dog Tray With Variations.* Naturally, we hoped that these atrocities and others of their kind had finally curled up for their last sleep. But we were greatly concerned about the lot of genuine music. We were sure, of course, that the masterpieces of Chopin would endure in spite of jazz and the locusts and even though the redoubtable Henry L. Mencken had once lifted up his beer-drenched voice to speak of them as sugar-teats; and we did not doubt for a single moment that the works of other great composers would continue to be potent elements in the civilization of the world, depression or no depression, swing or no swing. But how widely would the classics be known? We were worried, for we were almost convinced that the piano would never again enjoy the tremendous popularity of former years.

Our thoughts wander back to the square pianos of days long since gone by, when Beethoven's sonatas used to mingle their impressive strains with the rollicking syncopation of a husky *enfant terrible* called ragtime. There were duets without end. Yes, the old "squares" did their work well. Johnny and Bertha cavorted through *The Charge of the Uhlans* and other forms of entertainment—some of it highly profitable, some of it innocuous—while grandma and grandpa, papa and mamma, and many other relatives looked on and listened with open-mouthed amazement and pleasure.

Then came the upright piano. The world moves on, you know, and fashions change. Those who were fortunate and farsighted enough to own an instrument equipped with that curious ap-

pendage known as a mandolin attachment were often the envy of the neighborhood.

Soon the mechanical pianos began to make the welkin ring. You could pump away in the privacy of your own home as long as your back and your nerves could stand it, or, in public places, you could drop nickel after nickel into a slot and hear *Change My Name To Finkelstein, Poet and Peasant, Too Much Mustard, The Missouri Waltz,* or *Dardanella* to your heart's content. If you were a little more affluent than the average mortal, you could buy rolls giving you supposedly exact representations of the artistry of Anton Poundawaysky, Teresa Caresovich, and many other notables of the keyboard.

We have said nothing at all about the "grands," because they have always been aristocrats—aristocrats with blue blood in their strings.

The radio drove most of the automatic players into havens of well-earned rest. Then, just when we had begun to think that the piano played with hands would experience a sorely needed revival, the locusts appeared upon the scene. Naturally, they wrought great havoc. Now, however, these villainous pests have evidently decided either to fly away or to die of old age, and, as a result, there has been a triumphant return of the piano. It has appeared on the market in a radically changed form. True, it had always been an article of furniture as well as a musical instrument; but at the present time it sets great store by daintiness. It is here once more—here, to be sure, in heroic diminutiveness, but here none the less. It lends an air of culture and coziness to a home, we know, even though it may never be touched by anything more sophisticated than a dustcloth; but we really believe that in spite of the fact that we can have music and near-music to burn by merely turning a switch, the piano is reasserting itself with renewed vigor. We mortals are often inclined to sneer at the past and to think that everything is far better today than it used to be: but is it not true that there was much more genuine pleasure in the family circle when papa and mamma and the kids used to gather about the piano to make music and to listen to music than there was after radio and the locusts of the depression had begun to shove the time-honored instrument into the background? Yes, the reinstatement of the piano —even in miniature form—gives us much cause for rejoicing. Even if it did no more than tie the knots of family life more tightly, it would be worth more than its weight in gold. We shall watch this trend with interest.

The World We Live In

AT BREAKFAST this morning, as is our habit, we scanned the newspaper headlines. This is what greeted our eyes on page 1: N.Y. Mobilizes for Strike on Subway . . . German offer to Rumania Reported . . . Artillery and Air Battles Rage on Western Front . . . Britain ready to Strike at Nazi Ore Line . . . Norway Awaits Chamberlain Talk . . . 3rd Term Test in Wisconsin Today . . . Lewis Makes Threat to Bolt Democrats . . . Roosevelt Suffers from Intestinal Flu . . . Senate Body Votes 44 Million More for War Department . . . Tanker Believes It Sank U-Boat . . . Mexico Seeks to Buy $8,000,000 U. S. Arms. . . . No wonder so many people suffer from indigestion. Such a front page is depressing enough to react on the strongest stomach. There was not a constructive thought on the entire page. The only pleasant news was the weather report headline: Partly Cloudy and Warmer. . . . Especially after a long and cold winter.

What? No Grammar?

CONCERNING the pedagogical techniques now in vogue in the primary schools of America, we know little beyond what we read in the papers—and such notices, of course, are apt to be inaccurate. One that we came across the other day was, we hope, exaggerated. Our friends on the faculties of normal schools will perhaps smile indulgently at our naïveté. They probably have known of such things for years. But to a layman trained in the classical tradition news of this kind is little short of appalling. The shocking information which penetrated to our unsuspecting mind was this: In many of the more modern schools of our country, the parts of speech are no longer taught, nor, indeed, any grammar at all.

What is this? Can this be true? If so, the scales have fallen from our eyes. Whereas we were blind, now we see. So this is the trend of our unregenerate pedagogy! And the end, we hear, is not yet. Wait until the really advanced educators get control of things! Then there will perhaps not even be any more classes. Just a perennial playing with blocks, we suppose. Well, the thing has gone far enough now. Imagine going through life not knowing the difference between a noun and a verb! We shall presently have a generation of ignoramuses, flourishing diplomas from our educational institutions. Even now a legion of university students stands helpless in the presence of a dictionary, a catalogue, or any index

whatever. Why? Because they have never learned the alphabet. This, to our medieval mind, reduces the present educational process to an absurdity.

How do they get that way?—the educators, we mean, who substitute enlightened flim-flam for the good, solid stuff to which we were subjected in our boyhood? Mostly, we suspect, through failing to believe in the very healthy doctrine of original sin. The idea seems to be that all the boys and girls are born saints, geniuses, or, at least, cultured souls, who need only to be drawn out a little to realize their great destiny. Show them what is good, and they will desire it. Show them what is right, and they will do it. Show them what is beautiful, and they will love it. All they need is a little encouragement. Children must have changed a great deal since we went to school. We distinctly remember that we infinitely preferred the playing of football to the good and the right and the beautiful things we were supposed to learn in school. We did, indeed, learn some of those things—not as many, we regret to say, as we might have—but some things stuck. They stuck because they were learned by hard work. And we are old-fashioned enough to believe that for this there is no substitute. One cannot evade the mental labor involved in learning the alphabet, the multiplication table, and the parts of speech, and still turn out to be an educated person. Whoever it was that said, "There is no royal road to knowledge," knew what he was talking about.

Perhaps it is time for the Church to take her teaching office more seriously. The teachers of the Church, at any rate, will know a bit more about human nature and its needs than some of our educational experimentalists seem to. The parochial school, we hope, is due for a revival. We shudder to think of what our public schools may be like a decade hence.

The High Cost of Political Campaigns

NO MATTER how we look at it, we cannot escape the thought that one of the most serious blots on our democratic form of government is the huge amount of money spent in our political campaigns. Perhaps we are too idealistic, but we are sure that the great founders of our democracy did not dream that we would fall to such depths. Consider these figures: The Democratic Party spent $2,249,000 in 1920; $2,408,000 in 1932; $5,651,000 in 1936. The Republican Party's campaign expenditures for the same years

were $6,101,000, $2,866,000, and $8,893,000. To top it all, we are told that these figures reveal only part of the picture. A Senate committee which investigated the campaign expenditures in the last presidential campaign has estimated that spending by the national committees and state organizations totaled $23,000,000 for both parties. The same committee estimated that a full and complete accounting of all types of campaign funds would have revealed an expenditure of nearly $50,000,000 in behalf of all the candidates of the two major parties throughout the country. This is not a situation of which we can boast. Nor is it surprising that Nazi, Fascist, and even Soviet leaders point the finger of scorn at a democracy of this kind.

Hamlet Complete

WE REFER to the presentation of the great Shakespearean tragedy by Maurice Evans and his company. For the first time in many years, we are told, "Hamlet" is being given without cuttings. We read the play before and after seeing Mr. Evans and his company, and found that every line was recited, even the long-drawn play within the play.

The writer has seen only a few Shakespearean plays, and it is possible that for this reason he was all the better able to receive the full impression of this presentation of one of the greatest of all dramas.

He wishes to record, first of all, his conviction that, given without any omissions, this play achieves the ultimate in dramatic effect. Evidently, in the drama as in the symphony, we need "body," "volume." By its very length, for one thing, the blank verse in which the play is written, with its cadences, for once made the impression which was certainly in the mind of the poet when he used this medium. Not only your hearing and related sense perceptions, your bodily organism, but your innermost being begins to feel the rhythmic throb, begins to swing in harmony with the overtones of the drama. You cannot get this effect except by an auditory reception continued for hours, and it is an effect which leaves an indescribable feeling of exhilaration altogether apart from the dramatic effect of the play.

Let me mention this next. "Hamlet" is above all ripping drama. There is not a dull situation. The action is almost transparent to the beholder, while often utterly mysterious to all but one actor in the scene. There is, as the poet intended, so close

you can feel it, the flapping of the dark wings of Destiny, making the tragic outcome not only reasonable but inevitable.

Finally, one cannot but be impressed with the fact that the plot, as a whole and in its parts, all the motives and reactions, more than half the imagery, and practically all the lyric beauties of the play must be a book closed with seven seals to one who is unacquainted with the Bible and does not understand the gospel history and the principles of the Christian religion.

Go and see and hear Evans in "Hamlet"! You will hear the English language spoken with utterly perfect enunciation, for *one* thing, —and not a *little* thing.

Politics Is Politics

THE great free-for-all which precedes the big party conventions every four years is now in full swing. Candidates are jockeying for favorable positions. On the Republican side, Dewey is getting votes by fulminating against the New Deal, Vandenberg appears to be playing a deep game, Taft is carefully watching his P's and Q's, McNary is exercising his customary shrewdness, and, down Kansas way, even Landon is slyly putting a finger or two into the party-pie. Supreme Court Justices Owen J. Roberts and Harlan F. Stone have not rushed into the fray; but it seems to be a safe wager that their names will be bandied about with more or less vehemence before the delegates assemble to choose the standard-bearers. New York City's energetic little mayor—so some of the dopesters tell us—is by no means out of the picture. John W. Bricker, of Ohio, is attracting widespread attention.

Naturally, the Democrats are keeping one eye on the men who are scrambling to bestride the Republican elephant and two eyes on the candidates who are trying to win the coveted seat of honor on the mule. Jack Garner is still in the running, Jim Farley has his hat in the ring, Paul V. McNutt, the "oomph" man, thinks he may still have a chance, and Cordell Hull appears to be gaining in favor from day to day by the simple procedure of keeping his mouth shut.

But what about Franklin D. Roosevelt? Is he angling for a third term? Have he and the clever Postmaster General come to the parting of the ways at last? Is Cactus Jack trying to show his boss that it will be both futile and foolhardy to stand for election a third time?

It is possible that the President will have made a clarifying declaration before this issue of THE CRESSET reaches your home. On the other hand, there are grounds for suspecting that he will keep in

the dark until the very last moment. Mr. Roosevelt is well versed in the ways of politics and politicians. We can be sure that he will do everything in his power to uphold the measures and the principles for which he has been standing. He will fight the oldline Republicans tooth and nail; and, if he himself decides to retire after his present term, he will want a man of his own choosing in the White House. He undoubtedly thinks that he is serving his purpose best by keeping silent.

A few weeks ago, some commentators were telling us that Mr. Roosevelt's decision would depend to a large extent on what Sumner Welles would report to him about the war in Europe. Perhaps Adolf Hitler had a similar thought. How else can one explain the timing of the alleged revelations in the recently issued German White Book? It was plain that the shots fired by the Third Reich's propaganda cannon were aimed at the very heart of the President's prestige. But Mr. Roosevelt kept his wits about him; and, for the most part, even his bitter opponents balked at using ammunition bearing the Swastika trademark. The Welles visit is now history, and still there is no flatfooted declaration.

Primary elections have been held in several states, and various interpretations of the results—colored in great part, we take it, by the wishes and the leanings of the interpreters—have been sent out into the land. The most of these explanations must be taken with two or three heaping tablespoonfuls of high-grade salt. Remember that politics is politics, just as business is business.

THE CRESSET, which, as you know, refuses to take any political party under its wings, has been wondering whether a third term—or at least a try at a third term—is to be or not to be. So far, it has not been able to find a clearcut answer. We shall see, it tells you, what we shall see.

It's fun, nevertheless, to sit calmly on the sidelines and watch the games of platitude-spinning, mud-throwing, applesauce-slinging, smoke 'em out, and dodge 'em. After all, presidents of the United States usually have to reckon with the existence of the germs that bring about the disease known as thirdtermitis. The occupants of the White House like to coddle the little creatures; but, as a rule, they are wise enough not to trust them too implicitly. Mr. Roosevelt, we think, is a shrewd man.

The PILGRIM

By O. P. KRETZMANN

"All the trumpets sounded for him on the other side"

PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

Compline

MR. HIERONYMUS SMITH called the meeting of the voters of St. Chrysostom's to order. As the buzzing subsided he looked into the corner where the pastor sat. This was not going to be easy. He cleared his throat: "This meeting was called on account of the special request of some members who have something special to bring up. I will give the floor to Mr. Barnabas Harmon"—

Somehow he was even more tired than usual this evening. . . . The strong coffee Mother had given him just before he left the house seemed to have no effect. . . . He closed his eyes for a moment. . . . Thirty years now. . . . The day when he had come to St. Chrysostom's. . . . The crowds. . . . The good wishes. . . . The little wooden church over on Elm Street. . . . A long time ago now. . . . This parish house—he had paid for it with his blood. . . . His heart had never been the same since that breakdown. . . . The church next door. . . . Something of him lay buried there. . . . He had watched every stone go into it. . . . Perhaps God had really been good to him. . . . The dreams of his youth—some of them had come true. . . . He had not failed his Lord. . . . If he could only keep going a few more years. . . . Some things still had to be done at St. Chrysostom's. . . . Not old yet, but tired. . . . Better listen to Barnabas. . . .

"We all know, Mr. Chairman, that things haven't been going so well here at St. Chrysostom's. Maybe it's nothing serious, but only last week the Bowling League busted up again on account of some members do not like the way the pastor always comes around and asks them to come to church. Only a coupla weeks ago one of the young men in the church—a fine, up and coming young fellow, Mr. Chairman—says to me that the young people are beginning to go over to St. Elijah's. It seems they

have big dances over there and their preacher, a young fellow from Styx College, is right in there with them. And so a couple of us got together, Mr. Chairman,"—

If he could only keep his eyes open now. . . . He peered over to Barnabas. . . . The boy had really turned out better than he had expected. . . . He remembered him in confirmation instructions, a good boy, only a little slower than the rest and always too sure that he was right. . . . A little jealous, too, of others who had more than he. . . . But he had prospered. . . . Assistant Manager of the Feltman Shoe Company now. . . . A little too fat for his age, but his well made suit fitted him snugly. . . . Perhaps he had better talk to Barney one of these days. . . . Something worldly and smug about him. . . . After all, Barney was one of his boys. . . . His eyes closed again. . . . What had Mother said before he left the house? . . . Oh yes, "If you get sleepy, pinch your wrists." . . . He smiled. . . . That was Mother, always worrying. . . .

"And so, Mr. Chairman, a couple of us got together at my house, nothing official of course, and sorta talked things over. We all know what our pastor has done for our church. I don't haveta go into that. But, Mr. Chairman, time marches on, as the poet says, and our pastor, it seems to us, is getting along in years. St. Chrysostom's is a big parish and we got some very important people here"—

Important people. . . . How his mind was wandering tonight. . . . That word "important." . . . There were some in St. Chrysostom's all right, but Barney wouldn't know that most of them lived down by the railroad tracks. . . . Saints, some of them, like Mrs. Morton with her drunken husband and six children and her eyes bright with unshed tears. . . . Saints, down there. . . . Perhaps he had been spending too much time there lately. . . . He liked to sit in the broken rocker and listen to Grandpa Jepson. . . . He was blind, but he saw more things than anybody else. . . . Mother had scolded him for it. . . . She was right, too. . . . Of course, he had tried to find an excuse. . . . Wasn't it true, he had asked Mother, that every evening there was a meeting and if he went out in the afternoon to visit the members on the street where Barnabas had built his new house he always ran into bridge or cocktail parties and everybody was embarrassed? . . . Yes, it was easier to go to see Grandpa Jepson—and he had taken the easier way. . . . That was bad. . . . Mother was right. . . . More visits on Grace Boulevard after this. . . .

"And so, Mr. Chairman, we think the Church Board ought to see the Pension Board and ask

them to put our pastor on the retired list. We have always paid our percentage, and they oughta be glad to help us out. What we need here is a young fellow with lotsa pep and salesmanship who can give a sermon with punch and arrange affairs with zip in them to draw the people in this here community. Of course, we don't wanta be in a hurry about this. Let's take two or three months to look around. But, Mr. Chairman, something's gotta be done"—

So that was it. . . . It had come now, and somehow it did not hurt as much as he had thought it would. . . . After all, he was getting old. . . . Over sixty. . . . When you get old things look different. . . . Barney wasn't important, not really. . . . His soul was, but somebody else would have to see to that now. . . . Perhaps Mother and he could live on the edge of town in one of the little bungalows the government was renting so cheap. . . . Then he could still go down to see Grandpa Jepson and Mrs. Morton and the redheaded Johnson boy who would make a good minister some day. . . . But Mother. . . . How would he ever be able to explain it to her? . . . Mother was so practical. . . . She would tell him right away that all they had was the furniture and that thousand dollar insurance policy. . . . Oh well, that would be hers—and the way he felt tonight, soon enough. . . . Too bad, though, to go this way. . . . He looked around the room. . . . Hardly a man there whose hand he had not touched at the altar on thirty-one confirmation days. . . . He had baptized their children, seen their hopes crushed and rise again, stood with them as death swept over them. . . . They looked a little uneasy now. . . . Waiting for him to say something. . . . He really should. . . . Tell them they were doing the right thing. . . . That he was getting old, that their way was no longer his. . . . He would get up and tell them that and then go home to Mother. . . . But that strange mist over his eyes. . . . Almost as if they were covered with angel wings. . . . That roaring in his ears. . . . New sounds, not of earth. . . .

He slumped forward in his chair. . . . They caught him before he fell. . . . There was a smile on his lips. . . . Mother would have the insurance now, and perhaps God would let him sit near the door and wait for Grandpa Jepson. . . .

Staff's End

AS THE lights die in Europe, one becomes increasingly concerned over the attitude of America. . . . There is something profoundly wrong with the "neutrality" of many Americans. . . . The

day the Germans entered Copenhagen the *New York Daily News* closed an editorial with the following sentence: "It is all a highly interesting and exciting spectacle for us to watch—from the bleachers." . . . I have seldom read anything more callous and vulgar than that. . . . To be neutral does not mean to lose all moral indignation over the terror which is raging in Europe. . . . Especially for the Christian mind it is impossible to be neutral in that way. . . . *Commonweal* recently quoted from a Swiss journal in which a writer said: "Our being neutral demands from every individual the highest dignity in personal life. It demands the constant tension of our energies to justify that neutrality by unselfishness. And above all, it demands in every one of us, and in our country as an entity, a heart open to the sufferings of all other peoples." . . . That is much better. . . . *Commonweal* continues: "When men are dying and we can find no way to stop their dying it is on our knees we should be and not in the bleachers, for these too easily can resemble the stone seats of the Roman Coliseum from which, indeed, Romans found it interesting and exciting to watch blood flow." . . . There can be no doubt that our frantic desire to remain out of the European mess has too often resulted in a smug and self-righteous handwashing which is neither Christian nor American. . . . Nor can I work up any sympathy for the pseudo-philosophers of history who shrug their shoulders at all the dishonor, treason, and indecency in the European situation and dismiss it with the remark, "It is merely a development in history which we must view with objective coolness." . . . I suspect that behind this objective coolness lie a hardness of heart and a callousness to suffering which require repentance and return to Him Who told the parable of the Good Samaritan. . . .

An American problem. . . . On the evening of October 30, 1938, Mr. Orson Welles broadcast a dramatization of an invasion by "Martians." . . . Approximately six million people heard the broadcast, and the resulting terror was front-page news for three weeks. . . . Psychologists have now investigated the entire phenomenon and have published their findings in a volume: *Invasion From Mars* (Princeton University Press, 244 pages, $2.50). . . . Their approach to one of the most mysterious happenings in recent history is sound and intelligent. . . . About 1,700,000 people thought the broadcast was a news flash, and 1,200,000 were thrown into incredible fear. . . . On the basis of intensive surveys and one hundred and thirty-five detailed interviews,

the Princeton group has attempted to discover the reasons for the fantastic results of the Welles broadcast. . . . Their findings are disturbing. . . . Men fled in wild terror into the woods, chased down the highways, and did a thousand foolish things in their abject fear. . . . The end result of the investigation seems to be a picture of a world where anything may happen. . . . A world in which the puzzled masses are always on the edge of fear, unfortified against lurking disaster. . . .

In order that THE CRESSET may be a complete picture of our current civilization I shall bestow a doubtful immortality on a few facts and figures concerning our largest city. . . . *Population:* 7,434,346—If that leaves you unimpressed, here's a comparison with a few foreign nations: There are more people living in N.Y.C. than in Australia, or Bulgaria, or Peru, or Greece, or Sweden, or Morocco. *Area:* The city's area comprises 198,303 acres, or 309.89 square miles. *Tunnel Traffic:* 13,000,000 cars hurry through the Holland Tunnel each year. *Waterfront:* $7,453,400 included in the 1938 budget for 578 miles of waterfront development. *Churches:* 4,079,501 members belong to 2,809 churches valued at $318,786,150. *Annual Food Needs:* 244,299,056 pounds of butter; 500,000,000 lbs, of fish; 202,928,940 dozen eggs; 1,263,948,800 quarts of milk and cream; 1,618,321,205 lbs. of meat. . . .

Back to America and Europe for a moment. . . . I like the following lines to an air-mail pilot by Frances M. Miller in the *New York Times:*

"Above the tremors of the world,
The black morass of greed and hate,
Your wings of silver are unfurled
Where the clean winds of Heaven wait
To bear you on . . . and when the night
Draws close around your lonely barque,
A million starry candles light
A shining path across the dark.
God grant your ship may ever go
In peace . . . that you may never rain
A leaden stream of death and woe
Upon some hapless town or plain.
May folks who hear your friendly roar
Look up to bless the course you fly,
Nor ever learn to cringe before
Your hostile shadow in the sky."

One of our motion picture critics presents his problem—

THE MOTION PICTURE

By A REVIEWER

THIS is not betraying a state secret because no names or places will be mentioned. At one of THE CRESSET's board meetings, not so long ago, there was a difference of opinion, a difference, it is true, which did not lead to hair-pulling, but one which aptly illustrates the peculiar problems involved in writing movie reviews. The writer of this article had, in the course of duty, examined the unreeling of *The Women*. He was truly impressed with the acting talent, with the directorial skill of George Cukor, and with the dramatic excellence of the film. Despite these positive qualities, the final opinion on the film was condemnatory for the simple reason that the movie made glamorous an unchristian way of life. The impact of such a movie might have deadly results on the adolescent's mind. But, lo, one of the editors said in effect, "What's the big idea? Here's a magnificent portrayal of decadence in American life, a scathing indictment of contemporary morals," etc., etc. Rather than issue a majority and minority report on the film it was decided to omit the review altogether.

Right there you have the problem of movie reviewing and, at the same time, the entire problem which Hollywood poses. Should a movie reviewer examine a movie from the technical and artistic viewpoint, letting the moral implications take care of themselves, or should he consider primarily the moral standard in the picture and the effect of such a standard, if there is any, upon the beholder? Should a CRESSET movie reviewer be solely concerned with a film's lapses from the Christian standard of conduct and make just incidental mention of the technical virtues and vices of the film?

The truth is that movie criticism has no critical tradition to follow. It has no set of, let us say,

Aristotelian principles or standards upon which to base its considerations of a given film. Say what you will, the movies are an absolutely new art form. B. R. Crisler, a reviewer for the *New York Times,* said recently, "Movie criticism—with the very word 'movie' not yet admitted to polite usage—is the Cinderella in the kitchen, the Muses' illegitimate godchild, the foundling on the doorstep of an already seriously overcrowded family. The motion-picture reviewer ('critic' is really too good for him) is looked down upon by the literati, is distrusted by the proletariat as a tool of the capitalist press, is privately execrated by the film industry, which publicly showers him with Machiavellian attention (when times are good) and, worst of all, is tolerated with immense skepticism by the admission-paying public, at whose ungrateful shrine even the least conscientious picture viewer has often been tempted to commit professional hara-kiri."

In other words, to write an article or to prepare a study of the motion picture today is an immensely complicated business. There are so many elements of absurdity in the movie, there is at times a closely-knit relation between technique and morals, and often there is in the silliest movie a touch of poetic beauty, so that only some disembodied philosopher who is also a photographer, a painter, a dramatist and a dress-designer would be capable of an informed, all-around judgment. Probably the best approach to the movie would be first from the technical angle. From that aspect Hollywood should receive considerate treatment, although the danger of being too arty is always present. The second approach would be from an angle which considers all the economic, political, and moral implications of a given movie.

I

Anyone who has handled a dollar box camera or an 8 mm. movie camera must stand in awe before the accomplishments of the Hollywood camera. Even the average Hollywood movie betrays a pride in craftsmanship that is heartening in this mechanized era. Technically speaking, Hollywood has as amazing a collection of geniuses as one will ever see gathered in one place for some time to come. Take, for example, such directorial wizards as Frank Capra, King Vidor, Charles Chaplin, F. W. Murnau, Sergei Eisenstein, Alfred Hitchcock, and, greatest of all, D. W. Griffith; or such cameramen as Karl Freund and James Wong Howe; screen-writers like Robert Riskin and Nunnally Johnson. Nor dare one slight the astonishing work of the scene designers,

the make-up artists, the clothes stylists, and, queerest of all Hollywood institutions, the publicity men.

Of all these people, however decisively they may be involved in the production of a movie, two men, the director and the cameraman, are the most important in creating a film, whether it is a two-reel comedy or a ten-reel super feature. When the director and cameraman work at odds the result is frequently capricious. There have been films where the cameraman was distinctly angle-conscious, while the director was of the more pedestrian type in developing the story. A simple rural idyll is photographed differently than a complicated tale of intrigue in a metropolis.

A good director ordinarily works out his picture in advance of the actual shooting. He has in his mind's eye a certain mood which he wishes to arouse. (Lately, some Hollywood directors are beginning to toy with "ideas.") He uses the camera as the instrument to convey the impression and story. Alfred Hitchcock, the noted British director, says, "You build up the psychological situation piece by piece, using the camera to emphasize first one detail, then another. The point is to draw the audience right into the situation instead of leaving them to watch from the outside." In an official statement the Screen Directors Guild went so far as to say, "What built the motion picture was 'individuality.' Freshness of approach, the unique touch which gives vivid experience. These were the creative elements which raised the nickelodeon to the motion picture industry. This individuality was largely the contribution of directors and writers."

It should be an obvious fact that there is a great difference between the stage and the screen. The stage production is observed from a fixed viewpoint. For a time early directors and cameramen thought it was their duty to record the actions of the story from one position. There are still some directors who have that mistaken notion, as witness the recent movies, *Golden Boy* and *The Mikado*. The result is depressingly monotonous. It was David Wark Griffith who demonstrated in *The Birth of a Nation* that a movie must have fluidity in order to achieve life. Some of the scenes in that ancient movie have never been equalled.

There are a dozen devices which a director may use to establish a mood or relate a story. The art of using angles in pictures was introduced by the Germans. Such films as *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* and *Variety,* the latter photographed by Karl Freund, have made Hollywood almost fearfully angle-conscious. The trick of montage or

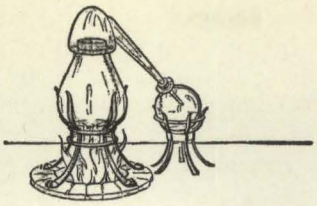
the cutter's art of interspersing scenes and heaping up images in a mad, cubistic conglomeration was invented by the Russians. One of the old montage standbys, still used by inexperienced Hollywood directors, is to show a crazy procession of skyscrapers and flashing billboards whirling past the eyes of a bewildered country boy.

It is dangerous to belittle the work of the cameraman. Indeed, there are critics who believe that the man back of the lenses should receive main credit for a movie. When a photographer takes a shot he is commenting upon the scene. He may approach a situation from various angles, either by use of telescope lenses, the close-up, or, by a clever manipulation of the camera on the dolly or crane, he may literally thrust a spectator into the action. The result of his efforts should be an enriching experience for the viewer. Basil Dean writes that "pans, changes of angle and distance, trick shots or what you will, these are the verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions and so on which when put together make up a coherent sentence." The cameraman has the advantage over the painter since he composes a picture which is constantly changing and which can achieve dramatic effect through the use of a sequence of pictorial effects.

In considering the technical and artistic achievements of Hollywood, one ought to mention the cutters, who can make or break a picture (some directors do their own cutting), the research men, the make-up artists, and the hundred other technicians directly concerned in movie production. Nor would it be fair to overlook the original work of such composers as Erich Wolfgang Korngold or Kurt Weill, artists who have been able to make their music an indispensable complement to motion pictures. Last of all, for a complete history of motion pictures and what they have accomplished, one ought to study the work of such authorities as Terry Ramsaye, Benjamin Hampton, Paul Rotha, Iris Barry, Maurice Bardeche, and Robert Brasillach.

With such a marvelously trained army at the industry's disposal, it is a national scandal that annually some 475 puerile movies are foisted upon the American public. At the most, about twenty-five above-average movies are produced every year. Why does this have to happen? Somewhere along the line there is a descent into bathos and infantilism that should be checked for the good of the country.

[*The second part of this article will appear in the June issue.*—ED.]



THE ALEMBIC

By THEODORE GRAEBNER

"The world cares little for anything a man has to utter that has not previously been distilled in the alembic of his life."

HOLLAND, *Gold-Foil*

The Moral Sense vs. Bertrand Russell. Really, there is something bizarre about this cancellation of Prof. Russell's appointment to the faculty of City College of New York. Bertrand Arthur William Russell is one of the greatest thinkers of the age. He is one of the greatest mathematicians of all times. He ranks so high above the average professor of physics or teacher of mathematics that only a specialist in higher physics or someone with a Doctor of Mathematics from Cambridge is able to appreciate Mr. Russell's station in the world of thought. Jointly with A. N. Whitehead, he wrote, some thirty years ago, the colossal *Principia Mathematica.* He has written at least ten major works in modern physics which would supply the ordinary teacher of that science material for a lifetime of study. If you catch the idea that Bertrand Russell is to be mentioned only with Einstein, Eddington, possibly three German and two French physicists of the last fifty years, you get an idea of the kind of man they were calling to City College.

Then a bishop gave an interview to the newspapers denouncing Russell as a "recognized propagandist against both religion and morality." Next a tax-payer's suit was filed by Mrs. Jean Kay, a Brooklyn mother. Then there was a hurried consultation of school and civic authorities, and the court order followed, directing that Russell's appointment to the faculty of City College of New York be revoked.

A Bad Egg. Undoubtedly, in spite of his achievements in the field of pure science and higher mathematics, Prof. Russell is a bad egg. The editor of the *Herald-American* in Chicago inspects a

book by the English radical entitled *Marriage and Morals.* He finds this morsel: "For my part while I am quite convinced that companionate marriage would be a step in the right direction, I do not think it goes far enough. I think all sex relations which do not involve children should be regarded as a purely private affair." He turns to another production of Mr. Russell, *Education and the Modern World,* and finds this apology for fornication: "I am sure that university life would be better if most university students had temporary childless marriages. This would afford a solution of the sex urge of such a nature that it would not take up time which ought to be given to work." Reasoning from this and other references to marriage, the editor says that Russell's teachings "reflect the political, social and moral standards of oriental barbarism," and he adds: "Mothers and fathers of America, if you permit this kind of thing to be taught in your schools, you are responsible for the evil consequences!" But neither the New York City judge nor the editor in Chicago, from their superficial reading of two or three essays, has the faintest idea how deeply the philosophy of Bertrand Russell cuts into the faith and morals of Christianity. Not only does he (in *The Free Man's Worship*) deny any claims of religion that do not square with scientific materialism (a somewhat complicated way of saying that he teaches *atheism*), but he pictures the universe (let us say God) in an attitude of defiance against man, full of blind forces that ruin and destroy, with not a ray of hope for man as regards the final outcome.

For the benefit of those readers who desire a close-up view of this great mind as it faces the world but finds neither good in it nor a God, an eloquent expression of the entire materialistic drift of modern civilization is reprinted here from his *Mysticism and Logic:*

> That Man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the labours of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noon-day brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of Man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins—all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain, that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built.

With its ravishing beauty of style such pessimism does more harm to the spirit of the younger generation than teachings outrightly immoral.

—And Now Miss Thompson. I have heard Dorothy Thompson twice over the radio (on some political issue), and now when I hear that self-conscious accent and affected enunciation (I hope no one talks that way naturally), I turn the dial. Once I made a taxi-driver shut her off. But I still have been reading her column "On the Record," which gives me the feminine version of Walter Lippmann. Now, after reading her comment on the Lord Russell mess, only some emergency like being marooned between trains at some "division point" in Iowa will cause me to see what she has to say.

It is not that she takes the part of Lord Russell (she omits the "Lord" only once, by the way), which was to be expected; it is the abominable reasoning of her comment that is the cause of this sudden coolness towards her future contributions. In the first place, she says that Lord Russell is a good man, honest, courageous, and that even when he defended the morals of the Bolsheviks (which, she admits, he has done) "he was not vicious or immoral." You at once will grasp Miss Thompson's standards of what is "vicious" or "immoral": the Soviet marriage laws which permitted a man to get married seventeen times (or oftener) in half a year are not "immoral." Next: "No evidence was presented that Lord Russell corrupted any one." The kind of proof Miss Thompson evidently would recognize is some illegitimate birth traced in open court to some paragraph in *Mysticism and Logic.* The fact that the teaching of doctrines subversive of morals is *per se* a wrong against society; the further fact that no judge in his right senses would ever instruct a jury in some case of vending obscene literature to bring in a verdict of guilty only if an actual case of seduction, sodomy, rape, or what not, can be traced to the merchandise; and finally the fact that there is no *moral* difference between the suave Lord Russell's sneers at Christian morality and the "tabloids and salacious literature" which she blames for the immorality of youth—all these self-evident truths are ignored by Miss Thompson. Quite naturally so, since she herself does not believe that "morality"—the principle of right and wrong—"is primarily related to the sexual behavior of healthy persons." If these words do not, exactly like Prof. Russell's, wipe out the distinction between human society and the barn-yard, then what do they mean? Miss Thompson definitely says that the law which

calls for one-wife-to-each-husband "is not natural to man," and that it is "not the usual practice of men and women," and furthermore that "the importance attaching to virginity is a species of taboo"—an unreasonable prejudice of public sentiment. Are we to suppose that a sentiment like this will be an encouragement to young folks to retain their purity, in line with what Miss Thompson calls the "theory of marriage" taught in the catechisms of the "established churches"—? Or will it encourage promiscuous relations between the sexes? I don't think there can be any question about the correct answer.

Continuing in her apologetics, Miss Thompson charges that quotations from Russell's works have been "taken out of their context" —as if it made the slightest difference whether his statement that communism, "if it conquers the world, as it may do, will solve most of the major evils of our time," was preceded or followed by anything else in logical sequence. Everybody knows that Russell has been a propagandist for a naturalistic, materialistic scheme of religion and morality these many years, and that the statements quoted from his works during the court action in New York City absolutely reflect his teachings. He, at least, has not been guilty of denying that he was correctly quoted. Nor has he acted the martyr. Miss Thompson's sentence: "He emerges as a twentieth-century New York Socrates, with the Bishop brandishing the cup of hemlock in his face"—is really funny. Can't you see her rushing with the camphor bottle to her Lord in the ring-corner?

What remains is the question, Shall *academic freedom* be made a cloak for the teaching of treasonable and immoral doctrines?

—Zoologist Lectures on Sexual Abstinence. He contributed to the *Scientific American* of May, 1933, an essay which bore the title: "Sexual Abstinence as a Biological Question. By H. M. Parshley, Sc.D." Prof. Parshley is teaching in the department of zoology at Smith College, the famous girls' school at Northampton, Mass. A correspondent of mine referred in rather agitated terms to the freedom of Dr. Parshley's views regarding sexual life presented in this article, and I addressed the Doctor with a letter of inquiry. He sent me a reprint of the article and a personal letter. Together they give us an objective and authentic picture of the modern college professor teaching a class regarding the various phases of sex life. Well, what have we here?

As for the article in the *Scientific American*—Prof. Parshley, in a sub-title, asks: "Is Sexual Inter-

course a Physiological Necessity?" The answer is, yes, and while he does not suggest any substitute for marriage, advocating "early marriage in some form," and while he justifies chastity *in women* since the impulse is more "obscure, diffused, sometimes not recognized," he definitely opposes the teaching of Christian morality on this subject. He refers to "that senseless and oppressive structure called Morality, which was triumphantly completed as the crowning glory of the Victorian Age." He denounces "this so-called morality" as having given rise "to ridiculous or dangerous phenomena. Among the first might be placed the advertising of books by local suppression; and among the second, the anti-contraception and breach-of-promise laws and the Mann Act." He definitely maintains that complete repression of the sex urge is impossible and that "any prolonged effort to repress it results in physiological injury and psychological disturbance."

Transmitting this reprint of the *Scientific American* article, Prof. Parshley emphasizes in his accompanying letter that he is not an advocate of free love but would rather urge early marriage and "call upon economists and educators to reform the system which now makes such marriages dangerous if not impossible." The underlying philosophy, however, is not in the least affected by these cautions and limitations.

There is no question about the destructive influence of such classroom teaching. In his *Personal History,* Vincent Sheean (1936) tells the story of the decay of morality as it affects the relation of the sexes and traces it to the hysterical devotion which audiences in Europe gave to the ballets of Diaghilev about 1924 or 1926, an enthusiasm which was really a frantic effort to announce the break of the present generation with the past. A denial of the fact that the books of writers who attack the very existence of the supernatural, and the influence of teachers in the colleges and universities who accept this view of life have had a major influence in the increase in self-indulgence and in promiscuity between the sexes sketched by Mr. Sheean, will be attempted only by those who wish to shield one of their heroes in the world of literature or scholarship. Listen to this:

> We are beginning to understand in some detail and particularity how conduct, normal and abnormal, moral and immoral, is the expression of "animal drives" or urges—themselves resultants of subtle chemical and physiological changes in the body—rather than of either free will or terrestrial and heavenly precepts.

I quote this from Raymond Pearl on *Biology and Human*

Trends in the *Smithsonian Institution Report* of 1935. Such teaching cannot be called otherwise than destructive.

And yet it is a mistake to pronounce our higher institutes of learning hot beds of vice and destroyers of morality. My impression, arrived at through some acquaintance of our young folk and also with the university pastors of various denominations, strongly inclines to the conclusion that most of the young folk who lost their purity at the university were pretty rotten before they ever got there. Unquestionably too, there are entire departments of the university in which the moral problem is not approached from semester's beginning to semester's end. It is a simple fact that even in the sociological studies, in psychology and philosophy, in anthropology and ethnology, in zoology and botany, and in other departments in which the evolutionary idea often is prominent, the question of morals and conduct is by some teachers never alluded to. There are instructors who strictly mind their business and avoid all theorizing and interpretation and simply guide the class in the use of test tubes, disecting knives, and microscope,—and all the year round do not even hint at the evolutionary or any other mechanistic interpretation of the facts. There are universities known to be "radical." But even in these there is usually one department or another—usually that of psychology or of history —that has gained the school its reputation of liberalism. That instruction in such departments is certain to work harm in the attitude of young men and women towards the problems of conduct, is beyond question, nor should it be denied that the grossest sins of impurity become alarmingly prevalent, where such instruction (Behaviorism, Freudianism) has made its impact. But nothing that has been brought to the attention of our people through the Bertrand Russell blow-up should be permitted to serve as water on the mill of certain hack writers who have in fictional or essay form portrayed the "lecherous mind" of the science professor and the undergraduate. Regarding this school of literature I shall have something to say in a future issue of THE CRESSET.

MUSIC and Music Makers

By WALTER A. HANSEN

The Brief Glance at Some of the Weeds That Clutter the Musical Landscape.

As a rule, it is infinitely more stimulating to write about great compositions, great instrumentalists, great conductors, and great singers than to deliver one's self of disquisitions on sore thumbs; but, just as a beautiful landscape is sometimes choked into an unsightly mess by noxious weeds, so music is frequently distorted into ugliness and outright meaninglessness by a resort to sham and frills. It therefore becomes necessary at times to speak frankly about blemishes.

For many, many years, much of the singing and playing inflicted upon concert-audiences has been in the clutches of a vicious disease which painstaking diagnosticians have dubbed ritarditis. To be sure, composers without number have always been careful to indicate where and when they wanted a *ritardando,* a *rallentando,* or a *ritenuto.* Whenever the *Urtext* of a composition tells us to apply the brakes, we have no choice. We must obey implicitly. If we refuse to do so, we arrogate to ourselves the right to know more about the work than the man or woman who gave it being. When the *Urtext* is not available, we are guided by sound tradition and by the judgment of competent editors.

Naturally, we are talking about compositions of real worth. Platitudinous tone-spinning does not interest us at the present moment.

Ritarditis is the sworn enemy of rhythm. To realize how deadly its bacilli can be, you need but give careful attention to a common way of playing and singing chorales. Sometimes there is an application of squealing brakes at the end of each and every phrase; occasionally there will be longer periods between applications. But more often than not a decided slowing-down is bound to occur at the end of every stanza. The pity of it is that the great majority of those in whose systems the virulent germs of ritarditis keep house and rule the roost do not know that a skillfully executed *ritar-*

dando, rallentando, or *ritenuto* requires the expenditure of much thought and care. If it throws the rhythm of a chorale out of gear, it is sure death to genuine beauty.

Is there, in all conscience, a valid reason for employing a *ritenuto* at the end of every phrase or after two, three, or four phrases have been emitted? Why, in the name of common sense, must there be a slackening of pace at the conclusion of every stanza? As a rule, a procedure of this nature is altogether unmusical, since, as indicated before, it usually tends to throw the rhythm out of balance. It is particularly dangerous in a cappella singing, because it often leads to a disconcerting departure from the straight and narrow path of pitch—a departure in the direction of the bowels of the earth. O for some musically inclined Dr. Paul Ehrlich to discover a magic bullet to combat the terrific ravages of ritarditis!

Now and then, one pulls up on debatable ground. Look, for example, at the conclusion of Chopin's *Etude in G Flat Major, Opus, 25,* No. 9, commonly called the *Butterfly Etude.* Some well-equipped pianists believe that a slight *ritenuto* is decidedly in order at this place; others are convinced that a decrease in speed is entirely out of keeping with the brightness and the good humor of the little composition.

Speed Mania

A mania for speed and more speed seems to be as prevalent in singing and playing as the scourge of ritenutoitis. (For the sake of variety, we have used another and somewhat longer term; but there is no difference at all so far as deadliness is concerned.) Perhaps our motor cars, our streamlined trains, and our airplanes have much to do with the inordinate craving for swiftness.

Do you want an example? Here is one. Many of those organists and pianists who play the works of Johann Sebastian Bach in public seem to believe that it is their bounden duty to cause their fellowmen to look upon them as veritable Seabiscuits and Twenty Grands of the keyboard. Clarity of articulation, logic of phrasing, pertinency of accentuation, and an accurate delineation of polyphony mean infinitely less to them than the ability to cover the ground like panic-stricken kangaroos in full flight.

Every one of us likes to see feats of extraordinary skill; but let us not forget that, at times, a great gulf is fixed between phenomenal mechanical dexterity and music with power and meaning. Organists who race through Bachian fugues at breakneck speed in order to show what wonders they can perform with their fingers and their feet may cause us to stand

agape at their technical skill; but unless they mend their ways and learn to dig down to the core of the master's works, they will never be able to give their hearers anything more than a hazy conception of the magnificent compositions. Let them take a leaf out of the book of Albert Schweitzer, whose profound scholarship has proved beyond question that excessive speed in the playing of Bach's music is contrary to tradition and out of harmony with good taste.

When Josef Hofmann plays Chopin's little *Valse in D Flat Major* (stupidly called the *Minute Waltz*) in double thirds we listen with open-mouthed amazement; but sober reflection forces us to admit that by resorting to frills the famous pianist lays violent hands on Chopin. We marvel when we come face to face with a wizard of the keyboard who is able to play Johannes Brahms' arrangement in double notes of Chopin's *Etude in F Minor, Opus 25, No. 2,* with lightning-like swiftness; but when our heads are clear, we realize that Brahms' treatment of the composition, clever as it is, detracts from its inherent beauty. Naturally, no one will be obtuse enough to deny that it is an excellent exercise for the cultivation of technical agility.

We must bear in mind, however, that, just as composers of real worth frequently require us to resort to a tastefully managed slackening of pace, so there are works in which tremendous speed in execution is of great importance. But even then it is never in order to let clarity and rhythm go by the board. Hear the peerless Arturo Toscanini conduct the final movement of Mozart's *Symphony in G Minor* or the *Scherzo* of Beethoven's *Eroica Symphony,* and you will understand that a master never permits swiftness, however great, to becloud the melodic line or to smudge the contrapuntal figurations.

Rhythm is Life

We must come back for a moment to the chorale. There are those who tell us that compositions of this nature are usually sung in a sluggish manner. "We want life in the singing!" they shout. Their demand is entirely in place; but, sad to say, they are, in most instances, merely giving vent to a consuming desire for speed. They do not stop to think that where there is incisive rhythm, there is real life even though the tempo is slow.

True, the renditions of chorales as perpetrated by some choirs often remind us of the gait of Homer's "trailing-footed" kine (the German word, *schleppfüssig,* is far more picturesque): but the reason for this is to be found not

so much in the choice of a deliberate tempo as in the fact that many conductors have no conception whatever of what rhythm is and what it means. It is a mark of execrable taste to sing chorales at a rapid pace. Speed robs them of every vestige of their dignity and sublimity. When rhythmical buoyancy is infused into the singing, sluggishness disappears as if by magic.

There are many more weeds on the musical landscape; but we have space to point out only two more—the "splashing" or "limping" to which so many pianists are addicted and the employment of a nauseatingly excessive vibrato by quasi-violinists.

Girls and women are more prone to splash and limp when they play the piano than men. You know, I suppose, how it is done. The portion of a chord assigned to the left hand is struck shortly before the right hand goes into action. Slow music, in particular, is often subjected to this viciously cruel type of punishment. But do not imagine that the offenders are all on the distaff side. The great Paderewski splashed and limped so consistently that some critics felt forced to conclude that he had deluded himself into the belief that such playing was beautiful. Splashing and limping have a pronounced tendency to make their way into the performances of pianists who have passed the prime of life. The fault may be explainable when it is no longer possible for an individual to play with the proper muscular co-ordination; but it never ceases to be an abomination, Paderewski or no Paderewski.

A vibrato is an integral part of the tone produced on the violin; but, when carried to excess, the results are cloying, queasy, and pock-marked. There are fiddle-sawyers who shake their left hands so violently and so unrhythmically when they play that the mere act of looking at them makes one seasick. But listening to their performances is far more unkind to one's digestive apparatus than mere watching. The tone dances as though it were possessed by some drunken demon; it quivers as though it had ague of the worst type. To make matters worse, those who indulge in such antics seem to imagine that they are lineal descendants of Orpheus of old, who is said to have moved the very stones with his wonderful art. How terribly the slow movement of Tchaikovsky's *Violin Concerto* and Robert Schumann's priceless *Träumerei* are compelled to suffer at the hands of the vibrato-fiends! If there is any hope at all for the regeneration of violinists afflicted with vibratoitis, it is to be found in large doses of the superb artis-

try of such masters as Jascha Heifetz and Yehudi Menuhin.

When all is said and done, we must grant that it is often highly profitable to look carefully at some of the noxious weeds that persistently clutter the musical landscape. By way of contrast, they give us a keener appreciation of the impressive beauty of the grass, the trees, the shrubbery, and the flowers.

Recent Recordings

RICHARD WAGNER. *Love Duet* and *Liebestod,* from *Tristan und Isolde. Brünnhilde's Immolation,* from *Die Götterdämmerung.* Kirsten Flagstad, soprano, and Lauritz Melchior, tenor, with the San Francisco Opera Orchestra under Edwin McArthur.—The singing is beautiful beyond description. It is enthralling. Victor Album M-644.

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN. Symphony *No. 5, in C Minor, Opus 67.* The NBC Symphony Orchestra under Arturo Toscanini.—If you have never heard Toscanini's reading of this majestic symphony, you have missed an unforgettable experience. Victor Album M-640.—*Trio No. 4, in C Minor, Opus 9, No. 3.* The Pasquier Trio.—In this work Beethoven does not reach the impressive heights of the *Fifth Symphony;* but it is music of much power and beauty. The performance is excellent. Columbia Album M-397.

CLAUDE ACHILLE DEBUSSY. *La Mer (The Sea). Three Symphonic Sketches: From Dawn Till Noon on the Sea, Sport of the Waves, Dialogue of the Wind and the Sea.* The Boston Orchestra under Serge Koussevitzky.—Some scholars declare that *La Mer* is Debussy's greatest work. Even if we abhor measuring masterpieces with a yardstick, we must admit that the three sketches are wonderfully vivid examples of impressionistic writing. Koussevitzky brings out the essence of the music as few conductors are able to do. Victor Album M-643.

PETER ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY. *Francesca da Rimini (Symphonic Fantasia), Opus. 32.* The New York Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra under John Barbirolli.—Here we find Tchaikovsky at his best. The score is prefaced with the following words: "Dante, coming into the second circle of Hell, witnesses the punishment of carnal sinners who are tossed about ceaselessly in the dark air by the most furious winds. Amongst these, he meets with Francesca da Rimini, who relates her story." Victor Album M-598.

ROBERT SCHUMANN. *Romances for Oboe, Opus 94, No. 1, 2, and 3.* CESAR FRANCK *Piece.* Leon Goosens, oboist, with Gerald Moore at the piano.—The compositions are charming, and the playing is remarkably fine. Columbia Album X-160.

THE LITERARY SCENE

Read not to contradict and confute—nor to believe and take for granted—but to weigh and consider.

ALL UNSIGNED REVIEWS ARE BY MEMBERS OF THE STAFF

America's Story Tellers

THE AMERICAN NOVEL: 1789-1939. By Carl Van Doren. The Macmillan Company, New York. 1940. 406 pages. $3.00.

THE bewildering complexity of past and present American life is thoroughly illustrated in the story of its novels and novelists. From James Fenimore Cooper to James T. Farrell and from Henry James to John Steinbeck, America's novel readers have been offered a strange and variegated assortment, crude at times, but always alive, decidedly unique. In this book Carl Van Doren writes the record, as he terms it, "of the national imagination as exhibited in the progress of native fiction." He defines a novel as a long prose narrative "in which the element of fact is on the whole less than the element of fiction."

It is well that he admits the presence of fact in American novels. All novels must have such a base if they are to retain the breath of reality. Anyone reading *Moby Dick, Uncle Tom's Cabin, The Ambassadors,* or *The American Tragedy* will readily discover the dominating facts, as distinguished from fiction. These novels could not have been written without the presence of those stimuli in American life which have made our nation and its people the repository of a new culture. In *The American Novel* we have a comprehensive and fascinating survey of America's novels and at the same time a confirmation of the rather platitudinous assertion that America is a land of promise.

The first American novel, *The Power of Sympathy,* published anonymously by its author, William Hill Brown, in 1789, was a feeble imitation of Richardson. 1789 was sentimental and domestic, and one had to imitate Richardson or not write at all. This novel, as well as several others, made small impression on the American public. Not until Charles Brockden Brown started writing his pathological romances was America the home of a native, professional novelist in the fullest sense of the word. Despite his powerful novels, Gothic and unsentimental to the extreme, Brown made little impression, and John Bristed, a native critic, could write in 1818: "Of native novels we have no great stock, and none good."

This lack in America's cultural life was quickly remedied by the appearance in rapid succession of James

Das Kirchliche Kunstgewerbe der Neuzeit

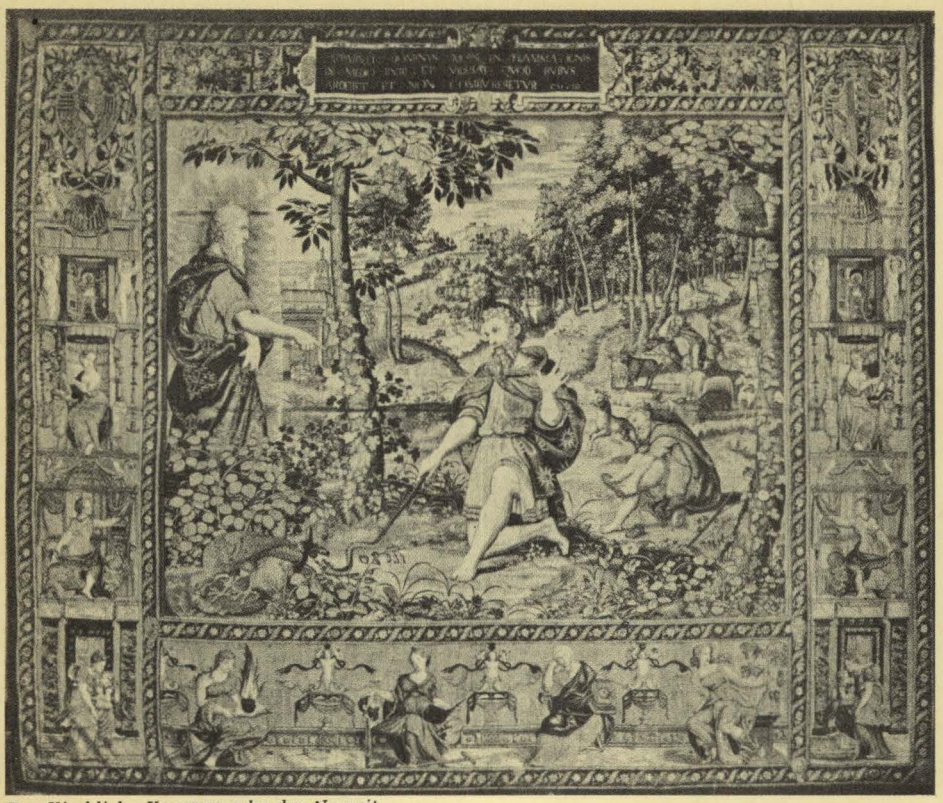
A primitive Gobelin tapestry of "The Last Judgement." It is preserved in the Germanic Museum at Nuernberg as an outstanding example of early tapestry.

Das Kirchliche Kunstgewerbe der Neuzeit

Most of the tapestries of this period were executed in Brussels. This is another Gobelin from the beginning of the XII Century. It was executed from the design of Roger van der Weyden.

Das Kirchliche Kunstgewerbe der Neuzeit

Raphael's designs for Pope Leo X made the most famous tapestries in the world. They were executed in Brussels by Pieter Aelst. The picture shows the martyrdom of St. Stephen.



Das Kirchliche Kunstgewerbe der Neuzeit

"Moses before the Burning Bush" is shown in this exquisite tapestry from the middle of the XVI Century. It is, at present, in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna.

Das Kirchliche Kunstgewerbe der Neuzeit

A very rich tapestry is the "Ascension of the Virgin" which is displayed in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. It is from a cartoon by Giuseppe Arnobaldo, executed in Ferrara in the XVI Century.

Das Kirchliche Kunstgewerbe der Neuzeit

Agnolo Bronzino designed this tapestry for the series on the life of Joseph executed on the looms of the Medici in Florence in the XVI Century. This tapestry is preserved in the Italian Government Collection in Florence.

Fenimore Cooper, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville. It is interesting to note the trend in American criticism in the case of Cooper. At one time Cooper was contemptuously referred to as a pompous blood-and-thunder romancer; today Mr. Van Doren compares Cooper with Scott and claims virtues for Cooper which Scott never possessed. Even more striking is the fact that Cooper's themes and situations are in scope and force strikingly Euripidean. The *Leather-Stocking Tales* have become a precious American heritage.

In some respects Hawthorne was both the Sinclair Lewis and Eugene O'Neill of his day. The startling difference between Hawthorne and Lewis is Hawthorne's Puritan heritage of a belief in the inescapable consequences of sin. Whereas modern novelists may consider sin an unfortunate manifestation of bad environment, Hawthorne saw sin not so much as a violation of supernatural law but rather as a personal violation of the integrity of the soul. Hawthorne's satire of the village and his keen interest in the psychological quirks of men anticipated the work of Lewis and O'Neill.

Unquestionably the giant in the history of the American novel is Herman Melville, born in 1819 in Albany, New York. Author of *Moby Dick* at the age of thirty-two, Melville for the next forty years produced little of permanent value, primarily because he had become involved in theological speculation and had found life, according to his friends, extremely uncomfortable after dedicating himself to unbelief. In the last three decades Melville has achieved some of the honor which was denied him during his lifetime. To this day *Moby Dick* and some of his lesser novels tower over the American scene as no other creative work. The sheer magnificence of *Moby Dick* can still hold a reader fascinated through the midnight hours.

LACK of space prevents a discussion of Henry James, considered by many critics America's greatest novelist. Carl Van Doren writes a lengthy essay on Henry James which is both illuminating and appreciative of this misunderstood American. Nor can one give space to Van Doren's excellent summary of the rise of naturalism and the influence of William Dean Howells on American novelists.

The greater part of *The American Novel* is devoted to a discussion of modern novelists because they are contemporary and because it is important to understand their significance. James Branch Cabell is recognized as a brilliant satirist, unfairly neglected these last years. Dreiser receives fair treatment, and one of the best analyses of Thomas Wolfe, that unresolved genius, is offered here. Van Doren also pays a well-deserved tribute to Willa Cather, America's distinguished woman novelist.

This book is recommended as the best one-volume guide through the maze of America's novels. With this book at hand, the alert reader will in a short time be able to assess the present-day product in this field. What America has read can quickly be found out from *The American Novel.*

The Lost Decade

SINCE YESTERDAY. By Frederick Lewis Allen. Harper and Brothers, New York. 1940. 362 pages. $3.00.

HOW well do you remember what happened in America during the last ten years? Could you sit down and write a fairly comprehensive account of the ups and downs that marked the course of our economic history in that decade, of the events that from time to time absorbed our attention, of the hopes and fears and varying moods that passed over the American people? Would you be able to recall the changes that took place in the political scene, in women's clothing, in radio programs and in pictures, in prices, in drinking habits, in moral tone and in crime? You would, of course, give space in your account to the visit of the British royalty, to the black blizzards and their results, to the catastrophe of the Hindenburg and to the War of the Worlds broadcast, to the Lindbergh tragedy and the disappearance of Amelia Earhart, to the attempt to assassinate Roosevelt at Miami (yes, the murderer's name was Zangara); but would you remember to chronicle the miniature golf craze, that of tree-sitting, and that of the chain-letters, or the brief splurge of technocracy, or the tragedies of army mail-flying, or the activities of the Holiday farmers? And how accurately could you date these things?

Well, if the events of the decade that is just over are not so clear in your mind as you could wish and if you would like to refresh your memory on them, you can do no better than to reach for this book of Allen's. It is a survey of the nineteen-thirties in America, just as his previous book, *Only Yesterday,* is a survey of the nineteen-twenties. Exactly ten years and a day are covered in *Since Yesterday.* That period, however, because of history's unpleasant habit of disregarding the Gregorian calendar, does not begin with January 1, 1930, but with September 3, 1929, that being a day on which "the people of the United States crossed one of the great divides of national history."

To be sure, they didn't know, at the time, that they were doing anything of the kind. On that Tuesday after Labor Day, when the thermometer registered in the nineties from St. Louis to Boston, it appeared that the most important events to take place were: the speech of the British Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, at Geneva, reporting that the negotiations on naval limitation were progressing favorably; the news of the arrival of the homeward-bound world-girdling Graf Zeppelin over Spain; and the tragedy of the passenger plane that smashed into Mount Taylor in New Mexico during a thunderstorm. But, looking back, we see that on that day something happened that dwarfed all these other things into insignificance, though everybody was then blissfully unaware of it. On that early September day the Big Bull Market reached its climax, and after that the way was to be downward, and within two months was to occur the greatest financial panic in American history, ushering in the problems and perplexities which we are still vainly

trying to solve. September 3, 1929, was the last day on which the American economic skies were cloudless—the last day for how long? Shall we ever see them so again? Shall our children?

About like this Allen begins his account—though, of course, with much more detail—and then he carries one gradually through the years to September 3, 1939, when, as we all remember, Neville Chamberlain announced over the radio, in tones low and tired and sad, that since eleven o'clock that morning the British Empire was at war with Germany. Skilfully Allen follows the course of the manifold threads that were woven together to make up the pattern of American life during the decade, and not only does he marshal facts and events, but he succeeds remarkably well in recreating, with deft touches, the feeling of the atmosphere and the moods that pervaded the various periods. Judicious and comprehensive as his selection of material is, it appeared to us that some matters of considerable importance had been overlooked, e.g., in certain fields of science, particularly medicine. But, for that matter, who can think of everything?

Bad Science

CHRISTIANITY AND MORALS. By Edward Westermarck. The Macmillan Company, New York. 427 pages. $5.00.

THIS large and exhaustive book, a work of great erudition and a summary of hundreds of volumes treating the general subject of ethics, is unfortunately untouched by the results of scholarship which have lately made headway in Europe as well as in America and which mark a sharp break with the evolutionistic scheme which dominates the teaching of anthropology today. Westermarck, in this his latest volume, continues to follow in the footsteps of Spencer, Frazer, Hobhouse, Alexander, Sutherland, and Maine. There has been a great turn in the tide since Frazer, in *The Golden Bough,* could write, "The old view that the principles of right and wrong are immutable and eternal is no longer tenable. The moral law is as little exempt as the physical world from the law of ceaseless change, of perpetual flux." More careful investigation and more painstaking field work have shown that primitive man knows the essentials of the moral law. The work of Wilhelm Schmidt (Kulturkreis theory) in Germany, of Jacob Henry Landman, W. E. Wallis, and others in America has demonstrated that many primitive peoples realize that there is a difference between moral right and wrong. Prof. Muntsch of St. Louis University urges that, instead of speaking of "morals in evolution," "we ought to say that the primitive is in continuity with us and that moral suasions are found everywhere in human society. . . . All the data point only in one direction—the existence of well-defined ethical notions among people to whom many writers have denied concepts of moral right and wrong."

Proceeding from premises fundamentally wrong, Westermarck's conclusions cannot bear great weight

with the modern student of anthropology. It remains only that we note the London professor's complete inability to recognize anything supernatural in the field of religion and his consistent denial of any specific worth of Christian ethics. He has words of praise for Seneca and Aristotle, for Confucius and Buddhism, but only grudging admission of higher elements in the ethics of Jesus, and mostly contempt for the morality of the Pauline letters. He has absolutely no sense for the great paradoxes of the Christian faith and hence cannot appreciate the relation of conduct to faith as disclosed in the Epistles of the New Testament. Not only that, but the beneficent influence of Christianity on the marriage relation and on slavery during the days of the Roman Empire is discredited (by the same kind of *ex parte* quotations by which we could make American life of the Twentieth Century appear like a government by gangsters), and the work of Grotius in the creation of a substitute for the principle of force and the labors of Wilberforce and others for the abolition of slavery are hardly so much as mentioned. But these blemishes, rather to be expected in any discussion of morals by Edward Westermarck, are of small moment compared with the author's consistent exclusion of the modern scientific viewpoint from his entire scheme of anthropology.

Abiding Beauty

THE TREES. By Conrad Richter. Alfred A. Knopf, New York. 1940. 302 pages. $2.50.

THE hardships and the achievements of the sturdy settlers who prepared the way for our country's phenomenal development have been dealt with so frequently and so extensively in works of fiction that some of us are involuntarily inclined to be shy of new books on the subject. We wonder whether anything more remains to be said.

Let us not forget, however, that it is often ill-advised to permit a feeling of satiety to close our eyes and our ears to additional variations on time-worn and hackneyed themes. If, for example, we were to conclude that we had read enough and more than enough about pioneer life in our nation, and if, as a result of being surfeited, we were to brush aside without further ado every new book treating of the experiences and the accomplishments of those who broke the ground from which many of the fine things of today have sprung, we should be depriving ourselves of the joy afforded by Conrad Richter's recent novel, *The Trees.*

Some critics tell us that when a writer has acquired the ability to fuse style and subject-matter into a homogeneous entity, he has successfully solved one of the fundamental problems of his craft. We, for our part, are disposed to be wholeheartedly in sympathy with their contention, and the belief becomes far stronger in our minds when we consider the striking appropriateness of the language in which Mr. Richter has couched *The Trees.* He is not content to let the manner of speaking used by the characters of his creation give us a conception of their background, their

habits, their aspirations, and their limitations; he is evidently convinced that the diction employed throughout the book must assist in leading us into their inmost thoughts as well as into their environment. It is, of course, infinitely easier to feel this as one reads Mr. Richter's book than to describe with what singular success the author has attained his end. The style is vigorous and racy. It has the tang of the forest primeval.

The Trees has to do with the Lucketts, a stouthearted family which left Pennsylvania toward the close of the eighteenth century and took up its abode in the dark depths of a wild forest in Ohio. Worth, the father, was a hunter by calling. In addition to his rifle, he carried into the new territory "a frow and augur, bar lead and powder, blacksmith's traps, and a bag of Indian meal wrapped up in a pair of yellow yarn blankets." Sayward, the firstborn, lugged "the big kettle and little kettle packed with small fixings." Genny had "the quilts thonged to her white shoulders," Achsa bore "a quarter of venison with the bloody folded buckskin her father had taken since the last trader," and "even the littlest ones, Wyitt and Sulie, had their burdens of axe, bullet mould, and clothes. Only their mother, Jary Luckett, went light, for she was poorly with the slow fever and could lug no more than the old blue Revolutionary greatcoat with the mended slit in the right shoulder."

Soon the Lucketts have made a clearing in the dense forest—a clearing large enough for a cabin built of logs. They live on what the country gives them. Game is plentiful; but when their precious meal is exhausted, Worth must make a long trip to a trading-post to replenish the supply. Jary, who knew some of the refinements of life before her man took her into the primitive conditions of the frontier, does all she can to make the family comfortable and happy. But the rigors of the existence among the great trees are too much for her weakened frame. The slow fever soon burns her life out. Her wasted body is deposited in a homemade box and laid to rest in a "bury hole" near the cabin. Sayward now becomes a tower of strength for the rest of the Lucketts. In fact, Saird—so they call her—is the principal character in the book. Her sturdiness, her fortitude, her resourcefulness, and her loyalty sustain the family through thick and thin. She knows how to guard against the wild things of the forest and against treacherous red-skinned interlopers. She has good sense in days of trouble and temptation. She proves herself a good neighbor when other settlers make their homes near the Lucketts. One day, little Sulie does not come back with the cows. She is hopelessly lost; and, incidentally, Mr. Richter's description of the tragedy is one of the finest things we have read in many a day. Worth forsakes his children. Genny becomes the wife of a good-for-nothing hunter who abuses her and later runs off with Achsa. Wyitt grows to man's estate. Through it all, Saird is pure gold. Eventually she has her reward. "She had set her triggers for Portius Wheeler, and

freely would she be his wife, for no man with such fine booklearning should bury himself out in the bush." Yes, Saird becomes the helpmate of the lawyer-man from the Bay State. They decide that it will be far better to till the rich, black soil than to continue to live on what the rifle brings into the cabin. "Oh, it was hard beating back the woods. You had to fight the wild trees and their sprouts tooth and nail. But life was sweet sometimes, too."

The Trees has in it an abundance of those qualities that lift a novel out of the ruck of the commonplace and make it a work of art—a work of abiding beauty. We urge you not to miss the joy of reading it.

Confusion and Bitterness

EUROPE TO LET: MEMOIRS OF AN OBSCURE MAN. By Storm Jameson. The Macmillan Company, New York. 1940. 282 pages. $2.50.

THE obscure man is a Britisher. He comes to Germany during the occupation of the Ruhr by the French. Everywhere he finds confusion, disillusionment, and bitterness. The war to end war has exacted a terrible toll, the Treaty of Versailles has made the burden infinitely more grievous, and now France, greedy and shortsighted, is paving the way for another bloody conflict.

Germany's young men are bewildered. Reason tells them to build solidly for the future; but they do not know how and where to begin. The blows rained down upon them have taken away their equilibrium. For the most part, they are ardently patriotic; yet some are traitors. Those who yearn to rehabilitate the fatherland see parties and movements of various kinds and colors rising up out of the dislocation and the despair. To whom and to what shall they turn for hope? Who will give them food and raiment?

It is a mad dance. Gradually the blood and the soil of Germany are being made fallow for the seed of Hitlerism. Even now the Third Reich is in the making—the Reich which is destined to flout Versailles and all its works, to fling defiance into the faces of Britain and France, to arm to the teeth in quest of *Lebensraum,* to swallow a cowed and helpless Austria, to absorb a betrayed Czechoslovakia, to come to an agreement with the High Priest of Communism, to overrun Poland, and eventually to enter the lists once more with the French and the British.

We know now that it was a dance which led to a triangular alliance of a curious type—an alliance which works in a mysterious way to gain its ends: one end for Hitler, another end for Mussolini, and still another end for the Silent Brute of the Kremlin. Historians dub one part of it the Rome-Berlin Axis. The other part—well, history has not yet found a name.

Europe to Let is not a novel in the commonly accepted sense of the term. It is a series of four vivid and poignant sketches: *The Young Men Dance, Between March and April, The Hour of Prague,* and *The Children Must Fear.* After showing us the currents and counter-currents in Germany, Miss Jameson has us ac-

company the obscure Englishman to Vienna. There we observe how and why Austria was taken into the maw of her powerful neighbor. In Paris and in Prague we listen to the death-rattle of Czechoslovakia, and in Budapest we learn more about the far-reaching effects of the pressure-politics of Naziism. We move back and forth on the troubled European continent, from one hotbed of strife and turmoil to another. In Geneva, where John Calvin once had his singular way with the government, we get an insight into the workings of the League of Nations; for here "under cover of its ideals there has been brought off more hard lying and more cynical bargains than plain chicanery would have thought of. Ha, what a city! A city of what gods?"

If you have a desire to become a proficient propagandist, you will find one workable formula in the following words: "If you shot Jews and liberals, or starved your peasants, and you had aristocratic families traveling abroad, you would have powerful friends. Get into your head that details of agrarian reform merely horrify countries where landowners are still powerful. Nor does it endear you to a member of the inner Cabinet in London to tell him that the press in your country is freer than in the United States. Your disadvantages are simply frightful. To crown them all, you persist in sticking to the truth!" These, mind you, were the instructions given by an outsider to a patriotic woman of Czechoslovakia —a woman who believed that she was helping her country by being honest, by publishing such items of information as "the numbers of new schools and roads built by the Republic."

There is power in the pages of *Europe to Let*—power and scalding irony.

Prize Novel

THE LOON FEATHER. By Iola Fuller. Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York. 1940. 419 pages. $2.50

THE tremendous conflicts that accompanied the westward march of the white man in America are easily forgotten in the fast pace of modern living. Children may still be fascinated with the Leather Stocking Tales, but most young readers undoubtedly credit these stories with the same amount of reality as the usual fairy tale. Iola Fuller has made a worthwhile contribution to both history and literature by recreating the social, political, and economic background of a period of our history which may not always fill us with pride, but which remains fascinating nevertheless.

The Loon Feather was unanimously selected as the fiction winner in the Avery and Jule Hopwood Awards Contest for 1939 at the University of Michigan. It is the story of Oneta, daughter of Tecumseh, and granddaughter of the chief of the loon tribe of the Ojibways. It takes place during the fur trading days on Mackinac Island, known to the Indians as The Turtle—a trading center where the "Long Knives," the Indians, the voyageurs, and the fishermen lived in teeming proximity during the summer season. From early childhood Oneta's destiny brought her in contact

with white settlers. She learned French from a "black coat" in a mission school, and gradually her life was bound to the lives of the people who adopted her. Yet it was the constant effort of Tecumseh's daughter to keep the best of her own heritage while absorbing the best of the white man's world, so long as it was possible.

THE author shows an understanding of the heartbreaking conflicts which were produced by the differences of varying backgrounds and, although the novel moves along rather slowly, the vivid descriptions of characters, locales, and events will probably keep the reader from laying this volume aside before reaching page 419. Pondering over these scenes of a slower-moving age, we were reminded of the wisdom contained in the words of a Southern Negro, " 'Taint no use to hurry, for you are apt to pass by mor'n you overtake." Our man-made, machine-whirring civilization does not yield us the thrill and satisfaction of living in, with, and near nature as did the red man. Grating wheels and neon lights have dulled our hearing and blurred our sight so that we no longer recognize the beauty and greatness of the world about us. We have also lost the appreciation of solitude.

Few of us today could say with Oneta, "I had no fear of silence. It was natural to my people, who knew better than others what wondrous things took place in it. Not shouts or beat of drums announced the opening of a bud to full bloom, a blade of grass pushing through the earth, or the morning return of the sun." Nor are we in tune with the lonely Indian trapper who refused a drink with, "Sorry, never carry rum. Plenty of trouble whenever rum and Indian get together. I never even carry it for myself. Don't know any comforts in the wilderness but what a man carries inside him. You don't have to cover up what you are out there—if you're afraid you can show it. There's nobody around to make fun of you. A man has got to learn to live with hisself out there."

There is also food for thought in Oneta's experience with the white man's ways while living in the French Convent at Quebec. "How surprised the nuns would have been, I often thought, if they had known how little the religious life had touched me. For those twelve years it was only another form into which I fit the movements of the surface of life. It was easy to conform to what was expected, and avoid the extra burden of penalties. I sang the hymns, I told the beads, I went to confession, but the ideas behind the words I learned to say did not seem to be anything that applied to me. They were no more mine than the history lessons about court life and wars in France, not even coming close to those, for the history of France had already touched me in my step-father's stories. . . . I was less skeptical than untouched. I looked at the dark pictures and the statues without interest, but often thought of the grave beneath the chapel flooring, where lay the body of the Marquis de Montcalm, . . . knowing that with him the hopes of his people were lost, even as my father must have felt when he put on his deerskins to go into his last battle."

Among the most vividly portrayed scenes are those describing the annual arrival of the voyageurs at Mackinac Island. "The long sorting tables in the fur yard were surrounded by swarthy men. The bell of the door of the retail store had been taken off the knob, for no longer was there only the occasional customer to call the clerk from the back room. He had two helpers now, and they all had to jump in lively fashion to keep up with the needs of men with money restless in their pockets. Everywhere appeared the color of new buckskins, and shocks of dark hair hung down over the red and green of new kerchiefs. The tents had already been put up in the grass-plots, and the noise of shouts and laughter, back-slapping and scuffling filled every street. From all the houses where the voyageurs stayed I could hear the singing of men as they washed for dinner." *The Loon Feather* is a first novel, but an author with the imaginative feeling of Iola Fuller will scarcely let the matter rest there.

Main Street: 1940

BETHEL MERRIDAY. By Sinclair Lewis. Doubleday, Doran & Co., New York. 1940. 390 pages. $2.50

IN 1920 Sinclair Lewis was still concerned with the vices of provincial America, and whatever virtues that boundaryless region may have had the average reader never did discover. That Gopher Prairie and Zenith had many shortcomings was obvious. Quite a few of those vices are present in 1940 to a troublesome degree, but—and this is remarkable about Sinclair Lewis—there are some virtues. Possibly it's age or the mellowing influence of time and success that has caused the Sauk Center satirist to look with a greater benevolence on America's various faults.

This is not to say that there is no satire or biting comedy in *Bethel Merriday*. Sinclair Lewis still has the knack or the genius of being able to dramatize America's besetting sin: materialism in one form or another. Let Lewis' critics turn to his novels, beginning with *Main Street* and ending with *Dodsworth,* his last major novel, and it will be quickly evident that Carol Kennicott, Babbitt, Arrowsmith, and Dodsworth were unhappy in an age which placed primary emphasis on the abundance of things which a man may have.

Bethel Merriday is not one of Sinclair Lewis' major novels. His deplorable habit of making faulty generalizations from specific incidents and his concern with surface manifestations are irritating. But one can still find in this novel evidence that Sinclair Lewis possesses what one critic has called "seismographic nerves." He capitalizes on the current interest in civic and little theaters, a movement which is having a startling rebirth. In addition Lewis demonstrates for about the thousandth time that one can find more pleasure in doing things for the sheer joy of doing them (playing the piano, painting with water colors, acting in plays) than in having someone else present one with a machine-perfect product.

Bethel is the daughter of an average, well-off Connecticut middle-class family. Bethel is bitten with the stage virus. She is not happy until her father

gives her the necessary four hundred and fifty dollars for a summer's term in one of the New England barn theaters. Instead of being cured, Bethel goes to New York, hoping for the chance to act. Through luck and the fact that she is a good, steady actress, she lands the job as understudy to Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet,* a modern dress version. The play does not open in New York, nor does the leading lady, Mrs. Lumley Boyle, fall sick and give Bethel the break. The company goes on a road tour which is at first successful, but the farther it gets into the hinterland of America the smaller the audiences are. The play closes in a forsaken Kansas town, and Bethel must return to New York. She had a chance in Kansas City to appear as Juliet when Mrs. Lumley Boyle was sick, but she made a horrible botch of the appearance.

That isn't all of the story. There is the usual assortment of people known only to Sinclair Lewis. There is Zed Wintergeist, an emotional, ruthless, absolutely artistic actor who plays the part of Mercutio and at the same time decides that Bethel is the girl he ought to marry. Andy Deacon, the rich young producer who goes broke, is an enjoyable study of the usual rich young man casually interested in the arts. There are such people as Doc Keezer, Henry W. Purvis, Iris Pentire, Wyndham Nooks, all of them fascinating studies from the Lewis studio. But it is Mrs. Lumley Boyle, the great star from London, who runs off with the novel. Aloof, imperious, indifferent to the rest of the cast, yet a marvelous actress, educated, trained in all the ancient discipline, hated by the other players, Mrs. Lumley Boyle sets the pace for the future actors and actresses of America.

Sinclair Lewis' ability to paint America is uncanny. The picture he draws is not accurate; it is a new world, blown up, caricatured, and yet recognizable to any reader. He has just one counterpart in the history of the novel: Charles Dickens.

Bethel Merriday shows Sinclair Lewis in a different, softened vein. The blurb calls this his "gentlest novel." We think you will agree with the blurb writer.

Good Entertainment

THE MORNING IS NEAR US. By Susan Glaspell. Frederick A. Stokes Company, New York, 1940. 296 pages. $2.50.

SUSAN GLASPELL'S new novel, *The Morning Is Near Us,* is a story of fear and frustration, of heartache and loneliness. An intangible but lowering cloud had shadowed the lives of Lydia and Warren Chippmann from earliest childhood. Warren eventually managed to emerge from the shadow; but Lydia had not been so fortunate. At fifteen, presumably because her parents no longer wanted her at home, she had been sent abroad; and for twenty years she was forced to remain an unhappy exile. During this time, Lydia traveled extensively and made many friends; but loneliness and an intense longing to return to America always remained in her heart. Her own feeling of being unwanted and an outcast developed in Lydia a sincere and profound sympathy for others who were alone and

unhappy. Therefore she adopted two orphaned waifs—a little Greek girl, named Koula, and a little Mexican boy, called Diego. Suddenly the opportunity to return to the small town in which she had been reared presented itself. Lydia's father had bequeathed to her the old Chippmann home, which bordered on Graveyard Hill. The estate would go by default to the Cemetery Association unless she took over the place within three years.

Lydia was overjoyed to be able to make a new home and a new, secure world for her little charges. She felt, too, that among the people who had known her parents she might somehow solve the enigma of their conduct toward her. She was especially eager to know more about the strange, remote mother whom she had adored. Accordingly, just two days before the Cemetery Association intended to claim the Chippmann acres, Lydia, Koula, Diego, and the donkey, Pancho Villa, appeared in the little town to the amazement and consternation of everyone. Warren had not wanted his sister to return, because he wished to be forever free from the scandal which had involved the Chippmann name. The townspeople, of course, were eager to add the Chippmann estate to Graveyard Hill. Lydia had the strength and the courage to meet every problem. Her simple honesty, her charming candor, and her genuine love for and interest in others aided her in overcoming seemingly insurmountable obstacles and in successfully solving all the mysteries which had so long bewildered and saddened her.

It would be unfair to reveal more of the plot here, for much of its point and effectiveness depends upon the shock and the surprise of each new revelation.

Miss Glaspell's name has long been familiar to many of us. Her *Brooke Evans,* published in 1928, enjoyed widespread popularity and established the authoress as an important figure in the American literary world. Several years later, her play, *Alison's House,* was awarded the coveted Pulitzer Prize. *The Morning Is Near Us* appears after a silence of several years. It would give us much pleasure to be able to say that Miss Glaspell has now added fresh laurels to her fame; but candor compels us to declare that *The Morning Is Near Us* is scarcely more than good entertainment. The plot is carefully and cleverly contrived, the characters are deftly and gracefully portrayed; but the magical fusion which makes plot and characters really "come alive" simply does not take place.

ANNE HANSEN

Wisdom With *Schmalz*

THE WELL TEMPERED LISTENER. By Deems Taylor. Simon and Schuster, New York. 1940. 333 pages. $2.50.

THERE is a refreshing down-to-earth quality in these discussions of music and musicians. Mr. Taylor has a keen sense of humor, he is a master of the fine art of debunking, and his wide knowledge is nearly always tempered with that pearl of great price which we commonly call wisdom. Now and then, he will ruf-

fle your feathers; but he will do it good-naturedly. The probability is that you will be more than willing to take it on the chin—as the best grammarians say.

Do not let the paragraph which you have just read give you the notion that Mr. Taylor's essays are chockful of well-meant fuming. He tears down many a dearly cherished castle, it is true, and whenever he sets out to do battle with beliefs which he looks upon as delusions and illusions pure and simple, he hacks away with a will; but he does not minimize the importance of careful building.

IF music has meant little or nothing in your life, you will learn much about it by reading *The Well Tempered Listener.* What is more, we venture the prediction that what Mr. Taylor has to say concerning the art will, in many instances, turn lukewarmness or even out-and-out hostility into enthusiasm. Ardent devotees, too, will enlarge their understanding by giving thought to his comments.

The author's style is neither polished nor crude. As a rule, it is colloquial in tone. The language is simple and straightforward. When you read the book, you will have the impression that Mr. Taylor is chatting with you informally in your own living-room. He makes no attempt to dazzle you with his learning. If you agree with him, he is pleased; if you disagree, he is happy. Why? Because he has the satisfaction of knowing that he has induced you to think more energetically and more painstakingly about the matters at issue.

Mr. Taylor believes "that music has very little to do with the way men live, or even with what they think." How will biographers of Bach and Handel react to such a statement? Negatively, we believe. But beware of being cocksure, for Deems builds up a strong case when he contends that "if there is an art in the world that has nothing to do with definite thoughts and images, it is music," that "when we do want music to express definite ideas, patriotic, economic, or whatnot, we have either to give it a provocative title, or set words to it," and that "no real artist *deliberately* goes about expressing his time" (meaning, of course, the time in which he lives).

In a chapter entitled The Old Contemporaries, we read that Mr. Taylor is "coming to believe more and more" that rhythm and melody are "the two essential elements of music." We applaud this statement with unrestrained glee; but while we are busily clapping our hands, we begin to wonder what, in the name of Allfather Bach's *Well Tempered Clavichord,* could have kept a man as sagacious as Mr. Taylor from reaching this conclusion long ago.

Speaking of the effusively praised and widely excoriated Tchaikovsky, the author declares "that when a man has something to say, he is a true master of his craft if he can manage to say it simply and directly." Again we clap our hands, and this time we reason that what is true of Peter Ilyitch is equally true of the man who fathered *The Well Tempered Listener.*

Frankly, we—that is to say, the writer of this halting review—do not share Mr. Taylor's unbuttoned admiration of Victor Herbert's music; but we have

determined to re-examine our own views and to look diligently for flaws in all that we have ever written against the composer. So far, we have not been converted, and there is slight chance that we shall mend our perverse ways; yet we are grateful for Mr. Taylor's plain-spokenness. We were tempted to shout for joy—and we actually did so in the spirit—when we read the brilliant vindication of Rossini, the fat man of Passy. Time was when we, like many others, thought that the corpulent Italian's works were "corny"; but we moved over to the right some years ago. Herbert, however, still remains on the left side so far as we are concerned. For some reason or other, the high praise bestowed upon him by Deems falls flat—to quote once more from the purveyors of choice diction.

You will find many interesting things about conductors and non-conductors of orchestras in the book, and you will be delighted no end when you read about the "musical baby kissing" to which singers are "particularly prone." The fact that the recitals of many prominent vocalists are concluded with a group of songs which are nothing more nor less than "high-class trash" is, according to Deems, "supposed to perform the double function of (a) relieving the listeners of the strain of listening to the kind of music that they ostensibly came to hear, (b) proving that the artist is a good fellow, after all, possessing just as bad taste as the rest of us."

There is a memorable chapter on Jascha Heifetz, and, as you enjoy it, you will learn about *Schmalz* in music. The temptation to quote is strong; but you *must* read the book. The essays dealing with program music, the radio, and the "useful pests" who are ordinarily dubbed critics put an excellent quality of gasoline into the thought-motors of all those who want to learn more about music and what it means and does.

Perhaps you have heard Mr. Taylor deliver the most of these discussions as intermission talks during the Sunday afternoon broadcasts of the New York Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra concerts; but do not let that deter you from buying the book. It will bear careful reading and more than one re-reading.

THE CRESSET SURVEY OF BOOKS

BY THE EDITORS

A brief glance at recent books—

NEWS IS MY JOB

By Edna Lee Booker. The Macmillan Company, New York. 1940. 375 pages. Illustrated. $3.00.

SINCE the newspapers are now devoting much more space to the war in Europe than to the struggle between China and Japan, many readers have gained the impression that the bitter conflict in the Far East is no longer of major importance. But the absorbingly interesting accounts, descriptions, and analyses given in Edna Lee Booker's well-written book will open their eyes to truths of arresting and far-reaching consequence. Here a newspaper woman of unusual acumen tells us much about the people of China, their habits, and their customs. She interviews important personalities and gives carefully considered interpretations of significant events. Her extensive travels throughout the length and breadth of China and her painstaking evaluation of Japan's highflown designs and ambitions have shown her that Nipponese successes mean stark and utterly useless tragedy not only for the Chinese but also for many others. She has no taste for the horrors of war; but, realizing the tremendous importance of informing the world of what is actually going on in the Far East, she bites her lips and writes breath-taking accounts of the terrible slaughter and devastation. "Japan," she declares, "is a realistic nation, and her program must be met with realism, not 'wistful thinking.' In a Japanized China there will be no place for America. As it is, American exports to Japan and to Japanized Manchuria during the past few years have been chiefly in materials which figure in Japan's war industries."

KITTY FOYLE

By Christopher Morley. J. B. Lippincott Co., Philadelphia, 1940. 340 pages. $2.50.

THIS novel could have been written by no one except an American thoroughly familiar with the ways of the American business girl. Christopher Morley reveals a new side as a writer and in our opinion far surpasses his previous work. We will not say *Kitty Foyle* is a great novel, nor will we say that Kitty Foyle herself is

the average American business girl. Her morals are dubious, and her language is exceptionally frank. But Kitty is an honest girl, and no one can avoid admiring and liking her. She is bewildered and at the same time sure of herself. She sees through the humbug of American life, but she also has a deep love for America. She doesn't know what life is about, and her religion has played her false. The story of her first twenty-eight years is fascinating. Now that *Kitty Foyle* will be filmed, with Ginger Rogers as Kitty, it might be well for the reader to examine Kitty's biography. The thoughtful and mature reader will find the novel a disturbing and at the same time enlightening commentary on American life.

DILDO CAY

By Nelson Hayes. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston. 1940. 329 pages. $2.50.

FOR two hundred years the Ainsworths manufactured salt on Dildo Cay, a tiny island far out on the Atlantic, a remote point of the Great Bahamas. The last of the Ainsworths, Adrian, suddenly discovers that the market for salt has dwindled away, until Canadian farmers are his only customers. He is forced to hire an accountant, Delbridge, whose daughter Carol actually does the work. Because of the low market value of salt, Adrian Ainsworth cuts wages and at the same time introduces modern manufacturing and accountancy methods. The result is trouble on the island, which is inhabited by two hundred and fifty blacks and the Ainsworth family. There is also the inevitable triangle involving Carol Delbridge and Adrian and his wife, Mary. Nelson Hayes has written a polished novel, although at times the key is too low and unrefined. The character of the aged Morales, an Ainsworth retainer, is admirably drawn. Some of the situations are rather sultry and not at all necessary to the development of the story. The novel gives an exceptionally interesting picture of a group of people on an isolated island who are suddenly drawn into economic puzzles and personal troubles.

THE MAJOR HAS SEVEN GUESTS

By Constance Wagner. Frederick A. Stokes Co., New York. 1940. 289 pages. $2.50.

SEVEN strangely assorted people are taken off the train at Pragda and become the unwilling guests of the Major at the Silver Goose. While no specific country is mentioned, it is more than obvious that the novelist has the *Drittes Reich* in mind. Her delineation of the Major approaches burlesque proportions. Cruel, crafty, absolutely militaristic, the Major is determined to find out which one of the seven guests has been carrying on espionage activities against his country. Of the seven people forced to be together for some time, the most appealing is Isaac Moss, a liberal and a pacifist from Minnesota. Moss and Polly Targ, a tarnished lady, strike up a friendship when it is apparent that both of them will have to face the wrath of the storm troopers in the National Prison. The climax of the novel is cleverly arranged and unusual.

Check List of Books Reviewed

November 1939 to May 1940

SEVERAL times a year THE CRESSET presents a check list of books reviewed in the columns of the journal over a period of four or five months. This list may serve as a reminder to our readers as well as a brief survey of the books THE CRESSET for one reason or another has considered worthy of notice.

The following system of notation is used: ★★★Recommended without reservation. THE CRESSET believes these books have exceptional and lasting merit. ★★Recommended—with reservations. The reservations are indicated in the reviews and are usually concerned with errors in morals or in facts. At times a book which is good enough in itself receives only two stars because its value is ephemeral. ★Not recommended. Reviews of these are printed in our columns for negative and defensive reasons. Usually they are almost entirely without merit.

★★★ *What Will Happen and What To Do When War Comes.* Edited by Larry Nixon

★★★ *Smooth Sailing Letters.* By L. E. Frailey

★★★ *Democracy Today and Tomorrow.* By Eduard Beneš

★★★ *The Pressure Boys: The Inside Story of Lobbying In America.* By Kenneth G. Crawford

★★★ *Propaganda For War.* By H. C. Peterson

★★★ *A Treasury of Art Masterpieces.* Edited by Thomas Craven

★★★ *Dictatorship.* By Alfred Cobban

★★★ *Christmas.* Edited by Randolph E. Haugan

★★★ *The March of Fascism.* By Stephen Raushenbush

★★★ *Main Currents in American Thought.* By Vernon Louis Parrington

★★★ *Words That Won the War.* By James R. Mock and Cedric Larson

★★★ *Eighteen Chorale Improvisations for the Organ on Advent and Christmas Hymns.* By Martin H. Schumacher

★★★ *Abraham Lincoln: The War Years.* By Carl Sandburg.

★★★ *Democracy's Norris.* By Alfred Lief

★★★ *Law and Politics.* Edited by Archibald MacLeish and E. F. Prichard, Jr.

★★★ *Men of Music.* By Wallace Brockway and Herbert Weinstock

★★★ *How Green Was My Valley.* By Richard Llewellyn

★★★ *Horizons of Hope.* By O. A. Geiseman.

★★★ *U.S. Camera 1940.* Edited by T. J. Maloney

★★★ *Union Now.* By Clarence Streit

★★ *The City of Gold.* By Francis Brett Young

★★ *The Mexican Challenge.* By Frank L. Kluckhohn

★★ *India Rubber Man: The Story of Charles Goodyear.* By Ralph F. Wolf
★★ *The Revolution of Nihilism.* By Hermann Rauschning
★★ *Escape.* By Ethel Vance
★★ *Fathers Are Funny.* By Frederic F. Van de Water
★★ *Men Under the Sea.* By Commander Edward Ellsberg
★★ *Ararat.* By Elgin Groseclose
★★ *How War Came.* By Raymond Gram Swing
★★ *Information Please!* Edited by Dan Golenpaul
★★ *Dances of our Pioneers.* By Grace Ryan
★★ *The Fine Art of Propaganda.* Edited by Alfred McClung Lee and Elizabeth Briant Lee
★★ *The Defence of Britain.* By Liddell Hart
★★ *Modern Political Doctrines.* Edited by Alfred Zimern
★★ *The Nazarene.* By Sholem Asch
★★ *The British War Blue Book.*
★★ *Modern Man in the Making.* By Otto Neurath
★★ *Land Below the Wind.* By Agnes Newton Keith
★★ *Moment in Peking.* By Lin Yutang
★★ *Peng Fu From Junan.* By Andrew Burgess
★★ *The March of Faith.* By Inez Steen
★★ *Live and Kicking Ned.* By John Masefield
★★ *The Sea Tower.* By Hugh Walpole
★★ *The Life of Greece.* By Will Durant
★★ *The Heritage of America.* Edited by Henry Steele Commanger and Allan Nevins
★★ *America's House of Lords.* By Harold L. Ickes
★★ *The Ending of Hereditary American Fortunes.* By Gustavus Myers
★★ *In Stalin's Secret Service.* By W. G. Krivitzky
★★ *Attorney for the People.* By Rupert Hughes
★★ *Woe Unto You, Lawyers!* By Fred Rodell
★★ *Verdun.* By Jules Romains
★★ *Idaho Lore.* Vardis Fisher
★★ *Across the Busy Years.* By Nicholas Murray Butler
★★ *Disgrace Abounding.* By Douglas Reed
★★ *A Smattering of Ignorance.* By Oscar Levant
★★ *The Star-Gazer.* By Zsolt De Harsanyi
★★ *The Inside Story.* Edited by Robert Spiers Benjamin
★ *Moses and Monotheism.* By Sigmund Freud
★ *Christ in Concrete.* By Pietro Di Donato
★ *Hollywood Saga.* By William C. DeMille
★ *A Sea Island Lady.* By Francis Griswold
★ *Children of God.* By Vardis Fisher
★ *Tommy Gallagher's Crusade.* By James T. Farrell
★ *Christmas Holiday.* By W. Somerset Maugham
★ *The Last Flower.* By James Thurber
★ *After Many a Summer Dies the Swan.* By Aldous Huxley
★ *Christianity and Morals.* By Edward Westermarck

The APRIL Magazines

Each month THE CRESSET *presents a check list of important articles in leading magazines which will be of interest to our readers.*

Forum

The Catholic Church Needs—

By N. V. FETTERLY

A Catholic layman frankly bares the evils from which he feels his church suffers and of which it should rid itself. The root from which these evils stem he sees in authoritarian concepts of church government and in the clergy's undue eagerness for power. The laity has no voice or control in anything, not even in the management of church property; its province is to raise the money that the church needs and to pay the debts for any building that the priests see fit to do. The religious instruction is conducted so as to develop such complete subserviency to the priesthood. Its regular method is recitation by rote; its aim, to assure uncritical acceptance and docile obedience. The clergy, furthermore, practice faulty emphasis and distortion of certain teachings of the church, stressing those aspects of religion which tend to add to their power and influence and minimizing those which might have an opposite effect. To this end they leave the laity uncertain as to just what teachings are authoritative. Most Catholics, for example, are led to believe by their priests that the Catholic Church dogmatically condemns birth control—which it does not. Again, the doctrine of the relation of church and state is left vague. The encyclicals of Pope Leo XIII condemn the basic principles of American democracy. American Catholics are not told what this means to them or requires of them. They have a right to know. This Catholic layman sees very clearly what is the matter with his church in certain respects: the only way to get the *whole* picture would be to study the Bible.

Movies and Propaganda

By WALTER SELDEN

A number of liberal and leftist motion-picture critics and others have been attacking the movies as

"escapist" and demanding that they become social-minded and "tackle courageously the contemporary American scene." Selden takes issue with them. That Americans are pretty well satisfied with what the movies offer them, is shown by their patronage. Probably "escapism" is exactly what they want—escape from the drab and sometimes harsh reality of life into the bright, if unreal, land of never-never. They are not clamoring that the self-appointed prophets and reformers be permitted to regale them with their own particular social, political, or economic philosophies. If the films permitted themselves to be made a vehicle for propaganda and controversial issues—would the country benefit? Would not the result be the creation of warring camps and of violence, bitterness, and hatred? Seems to us Selden is right.

A Letter from Sweden

By SVEN HEDIN

The great Swedish explorer appeals to America not to become involved in the war because its participation would only lengthen the struggle and make it the more bloody and destructive. Russia, in the end, would be the only gainer. Instead, America should, as leader of all the neutral nations in the world, set itself the task of compelling a peace that would give security and "lead the way to a sensible reconstruction of Europe and a just and right division of the productive areas of the world."

The Atlantic Monthly

Program For Peace

By PAUL REYNAUD

This article is a scoop for the *Atlantic.* At the time it was written Paul Reynaud was still the French Minister of Finance. Now he is the premier. What he has to say about French and British war aims is important. He considers the economic agreements between England and France an economic achievement of the first rank. Reynaud claims that such an agreement will allow for the fullest development of the war potentialities of the Allies. At the same time this agreement, signed December 4, will serve as a foundation for the economic reorganization of Europe after the victory of the Allies. Thus France and England, according to Reynaud, will rewrite European history by establishing economic cooperation between nations and continents. The article is an admirable summary of the current French premier's war aims. We shall be keenly interested to see if and how these aims will be realized.

Why People Do Not Pray

By BERNARD IDDINGS BELL

While one may disagree with some of the minor points, Canon Bell has written an intensely fascinating article on prayer. 'Fascinating' is an inadequate word to describe one of the finest popular expositions on prayer we have read in many years. Canon Bell discusses the question of why prayer has become 'the great lost art.' He shows how and for what a Christian must pray. He also defines a prayer by pointing to the example of our Lord praying his great intercessory prayer in John 17 and the prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22, 39-44). This issue of the *Atlantic* is worth buying for Bernard Iddings Bell's study of prayer.

Fortune

Fortune Survey

What are the opinions of the American people with regard to government expenditures? For what purposes do they think the public money should preferentially be spent? These are the questions which *Fortune's* April survey canvasses. It finds that the people rank four main groups of government undertakings in the following order of importance (100 points being the perfect score): (1) reducing poverty and unemployment, 76; (2) increasing armaments, 65; (3) dealing with agricultural problems, 62; (4) public construction, 42.—When these groups are taken separately, no great difference is registered on the following projects (under 1): old-age pensions, 60; slum clearance and better housing, 58; training skilled labor, 56; work relief, 52.—A more decided preference is shown on the distribution of military subsidies (2): navy, 72; air force, 72; army, 53; training civilian pilots, 46.—The largest spread of choices appears with reference to agricultural rehabilitation (3): reforestation and soil conservation, 73; controlling pests, 67; removing poor farmland from cultivation, 48; subsidizing farmers, 29; controlling farm production, *minus* 5.—Various forms of public construction (4) rate as follows: flood control, 72; big national highways, 62; airports, 57; federal power plants, 39.

Harper's

The War and America

By ELMER DAVIS

America's part in the present war should be determined solely by national interest in the light of the facts and the evidence. To say that it makes no difference to our national interests which side wins is not in harmony with the facts.

To conclude that we must, therefore, join the Allies and send our troops to Europe is inconsistent with our national interest because the loss would be greater than the gain. The author is fully aware of his poor logic, which, however, he defends as sound politics. "To say that this is a war between the pot and the kettle, that nothing about it concerns us and we ought to keep out of it, is logical enough; and so it is to say that this is a struggle to preserve civilization and we ought to be in there helping out. But to say, as I have tried to say, that Europe has some hope for a decent future if the Allies win and none at all if Naziism and Communism triumph, that it makes a considerable difference to selfish American interests which side comes out on top—to say all that and still argue that we ought to keep out of it if we can may seem to make no sense at all." To prove, however, that it does make sense is the author's purpose. The test which he applies is admittedly not altruism, but merely selfish national interest.

Soap Opera

By MERRILL DENISON

WQXR: Quality on the Air

By HENRY F. PRINGLE

Soap opera is the name given to the fifteen-minute "sob-in-the-throat" daytime radio dramas which are largely sponsored by the leading soap manufacturers. In 1939, for example, Procter & Gamble paid more than eight million dollars for radio time. This article discusses the writing, the quality, and the appeal of these productions, whose average daily audience is estimated at between 600,000 and 750,000. The author is disturbed by the popularity of these radio serials and by their cultural and educational implications. "One cannot help wondering what would happen were the same technics used to serve political ends rather than the relatively harmless ones of promoting the sale of soap, breakfast foods, and tooth pastes."

WQXR is the story of the New York radio station whose controlling interest is owned by John V. L. Hogan. The programs of this station are planned and presented upon the assumption that the radio listener is an intelligent and cultured person, "an assumption which would qualify Mr. Hogan for a lunatic asylum in the minds of nearly all other radio company officials." Although the station is still operating at a deficit, its income and audience are increasing, and Mr. Hogan has not lost his hope of making quality on the air financially profitable. The need for such a demonstration is evident when we know

that the programs which make possible the billion-dollar radio broadcasting industry "are, in the main, balderdash."

Scribner's Commentator

King Wilhelmina

By FREDERIC SONDERN, JR.

Queen Wilhelmina, who has been called "the only king in Europe," is the simplest, yet most autocratic monarch on that continent. A constitutional ruler, with the power of absolute veto, of dissolving Parliament, and of appointing fourteen members of the Council of State which must be consulted on all legislation, she has reigned over her empire, the third largest in the world, so wisely for half a century that she is affectionately known as *Landsmoeder* by her grateful people. She maintains a firm grasp of affairs by careful study of all reports and by reading almost every important book with social and political bearing published in English, German, French, and Italian, and by questioning exhaustively every expert who comes within her reach. As a statesman she is forthright and courageous. In 1900, only 20 years old, she sent a Dutch man-of-war to rescue Paul Kruger from the British in South Africa. In 1918 she refused to allow the extradition of Kaiser Wilhelm. Three years ago she would not permit the swastika flag to fly at the marriage of her daughter Juliana to the German Prince Bernard, and wrote to the angry Hitler: "This is the marriage of my daughter to the man she loves, not the marriage of the Netherlands to Germany." She has carefully guarded the interests of her people. Nowhere in Europe has so thorough a social program been completed, slum clearance, community housing and hospitalization, unemployment, old age insurance, wage and hour control—with a maximum of efficiency and a minimum of noise. She has successfully handled her gifted and independent daughter and her husband. Since the outbreak of the present war of watchful waiting, she has been extremely busy endeavoring to sustain the neutrality of her country.

Hijacking the Mail

By FULTON LEWIS, JR.

Britain's interception of the U.S. mails to foreign countries, the author tells us, has not only called forth a string of diplomatic protests from our State Department, but has stirred up a storm of controversy among our politicians and legislators. Mr. Lewis does not try to settle the moot question of whether Britain's actions are in violation of the International

Postal Treaty. He adds the claims made by the representative from Minnesota, Melvin Maas, to the effect that British authorities have taken out of the mails a great deal more than mere cash intended for the Germans. Orders from neutral countries, Mr. Maas says, have been removed, and the British have tried to get these orders for their own firms. The congressman claims to have many cases to prove his point.

McNutt, Apollo of Politics

By MARGARET FISHBACK

In a rollicking poem of 52 lines, cleverly illustrated, Miss Fishback presents the Democratic candidate from Indiana, whose handsome features are known from coast to coast, closing with this pointed verse:

"The Democratic nomination
Is P. McNutt's great Aspiration.
He may not ever get there, BUT
He craves the White House for McNutt,
And prays the gods in Washington
That Franklin Delano won't run."

One way of getting rid of a presidential candidate is to laugh him out of court.

❖

The Acme of Futility

The woodpecker wept in deep dismay,
As the shades of evening stole;
He had pecked and pecked and pecked all day
At a concrete telegraph pole.

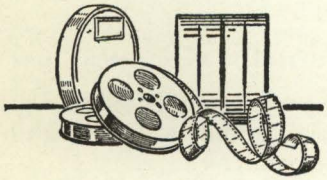
R.H.A.

"On Self-Culture"

It is chiefly through books that we enjoy intercourse with superior minds, and these invaluable means of communication are in reach of all. In the best books, great men talk to us, give us their most precious thoughts, and pour their souls into ours.

WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING

THE MOTION PICTURE



THE CRESSET *examines samples of Hollywood offerings.*

FLYING DEUCES (RKO)

Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy are good in two-reelers, but when they have to stretch out their act for six or seven reels the result is painful. One or two funny sequences might make the children laugh. Otherwise, tiresome.

ABE LINCOLN IN ILLINOIS (RKO)

Robert Sherwood's superb play reaches the screen intact, although the screening is almost too literally true to the stage version. Nevertheless, Raymond Massey, Ruth Gordon, and Gene Lockhart breathe life into the story of Lincoln up to his election to the presidency. The sets are accurate reproductions of the Illinois scene. This movie is a family picture despite the tragic love affair of Abe Lincoln and Ann Rutledge and the unhappy marriage of Abe and Mary Todd.

THE ROAD TO SINGAPORE (Paramount)

Whatever you may think, we still regard Bing Crosby as one of America's more intelligent actors. All the more pity that he must appear in one of those South Sea guitar-operas with Lamour and Bob Hope, America's latest comic genius. The story is of no significance. Neither is the movie.

THE MAN FROM DAKOTA (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer)

Anything's possible in Hollywood. Here, fellow citizens, are the Civil War and a Russian beauty snarled up in a plot which creaks and groans for one hour and forty minutes. The Russian gal is Dolores del Rio, who is unjustly accused of murder. Wallace Beery does a lot of leering, and that's about all. We still don't get the movie's connection with the title. There is one, naturally, but a not very important one. Stay away.

TOO MANY HUSBANDS (Columbia)

Tennyson did a better job on the Enoch Arden theme than

Hollywood. The movie is all about a husband who returns and finds that his ever-loving wife has married another man. Instead of lamenting unduly, he tries to square up accounts. Some of the comedy is rather stretched. Jean Arthur as the wife and Melvyn Douglas and Fred MacMurray as the husbands do a fairly good bit of work in the comedy. Not so very funny.

A BILL OF DIVORCEMENT (RKO)

Clemence Dane's old play is filmed for the third or fourth time. The cast is distinguished, and the story is as moving as ever. It's all about insanity, heredity, and divorce. Maureen O'Hara, Fay Bainter, and several distinguished British actors do a competent job. A decidedly adult movie.

SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON (RKO)

Johann Rudolf Wyss' famous classic has been filmed with outstanding success. Adults as well as children will enjoy the picture. It is an oasis in a desert chockful of hackneyed love stories and inane mystery yarns. Thomas Mitchell portrays the rôle of Father Robinson with consummate skill, and Edna Best, who is cast as the mother torn between devotion to duty and a yearning for the fine things left behind, imbues her acting with artistry of a high order. The photography is excellent, even though you will find details that do not jibe with natural history. The music is based on Franz Schubert's beautiful *Quartet in A Minor.*

VIRGINIA CITY (Warner Brothers)

A picture for those who like large doses of excitement and are not too much concerned about the little item of historical plausibility. The story deals with the futile attempt of the Confederates to transport a large amount of gold across the continent from Virginia City, Nevada. A patriotic and resourceful officer wearing the Blue (Errol Flynn) foils the carefully laid plans of an equally patriotic and resourceful officer wearing the Grey (Randolph Scott). Naturally, the heroine (Miriam Hopkins) is desperately in love with the hero. We cannot give "Virginia City" much of a recommendation.

STRANGE CARGO (M-G-M)

The stars are Clark Gable and Joan Crawford; the story is highly colored, and powerful. A group of desperate convicts manages to escape from a French penal colony off the coast of South America. Only two reach the mainland alive —two, that is, and a cafe entertainer who, after being ordered to leave the island within twelve

hours, joins the fugitives and shares their terrible hardships in the jungle and on the sea. Many of the scenes are gruesome. There are strange twists and complications in the yarn. The desperadoes make much use of the Bible; but their explanations of what they read there are colored and warped by their habits and their environment. *Strange Cargo* is not a picture for children. In fact, it has been condemned by the Legion of Decency. It had best be left unseen.

REBECCA (David O. Selznick-United Artists)

Daphne du Maurier's novel is one of the most unusual—and also one of the most fascinating—in recent literary history. And Hollywood is to be complimented on its exceptionally faithful adherence to the original in the screen version of "Rebecca." Here, indeed, is a picture of extraordinary power, marked by superb acting and rare directorial skill. Its main character, Rebecca, never appears, but her presence pervades every scene, every action, from the dream with which the story opens to its startling dénouement.

The success of the picture is principally due to the outstanding performance of Joan Fontaine—for the entire course of the drama, as it moves inexorably to its climax, is reflected in her face. It is a girlish, unsophisticated, unbelievably naïve face, the face of the perpetually frightened, nameless little heroine who treads the ancient halls of Manderley, over which fate has made her the mistress as the bride of Max de Winter, with hair disheveled, wearing an old sweater, haunted in her every waking moment by the specter of Rebecca, the first Mrs. de Winter—Rebecca, the most dazzlingly beautiful of women—Rebecca, whose presence was so imperishable that it continued to dominate Manderley long after her death—Rebecca, the very mention of whose name brought strange and unbearable pain to her bereaved husband—Rebecca, who, though dead, could still overshadow and eclipse her successor—Rebecca, whose spirit erected an intangible barrier between Max de Winter and his new bride—Rebecca, so lovely and so vital, and yet—

But we will not spoil your enjoyment of the picture by telling you of its startling climax. Suffice it to say that the film industry has made a truly great novel into a truly great picture.

MY LITTLE CHICKADEE (Universal)

Mae West represents the lowest stratum of the motion picture world. Every picture in which she has appeared thus far has been unfit for Christian eyes and repug-

nant to decent minds. "My Little Chickadee" is no exception to this rule. We hope that the day is not far off when Mae West, with her corrupting and degrading influence on American morals, will be permanently banished from the screen.

BROADWAY MELODY OF 1940 (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer)

This picture is utterly worthless. The plot is frayed around the edges; the acting is wooden. Eleanor Powell, George Murphy, and an aging Fred Astaire stagger through the hackneyed song-and-dance routine. The songs are banal, and the dancing is obnoxious. Please take our advice and don't waste any time or money on this cinematic inanity.

THE SHOP AROUND THE CORNER (M-G-M)

This is the simple, unpretentious story of Matuschek, owner of a little leather shop in Budapest where leather goods and novelties are sold, and of his employees.

Two talented young actors, James Stewart and Margaret Sullavan, manage to put quite a bit of realism into the story. Frank Morgan plays the part of Matuschek, beloved and yet feared employer. It is a much better role than the comedy parts in which he has recently appeared.

There is nothing outstanding about the picture, however. It is a little out of the ordinary, runs along smoothly enough, and provides light entertainment.

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The Novel

"The function of the novel is not to treat of life as it appears to the ordinary eye; or even to treat life in its ordinary aspect, if that were ascertainable. It is not even to treat of life as it should be, if *that* were ascertainable. Its function is not primarily to report the familiar at all. The function of the novel is to reflect the familiar as permeated by the unfamiliar; to reflect the unknown in its daily office of permeating the known."—ZONA GALE.

LETTERS to the EDITOR

Business Defends Itself

SIR:

Your article in the February issue of THE CRESSET under the caption, "Capitalism's Danger," attracted my special attention, as the article points out a bad practice in business evidently for the purpose of giving support to the movement that more regulation of business by the Government is necessary.

In view of widespread unemployment and the lack of courage on the part of people to engage in business to create employment, it would seem that more effort should be made by our editors to bring to our people's attention the benefits and blessings they have received from our free enterprise system in this country, in spite of its faults and of bad practices on the part of some business men.

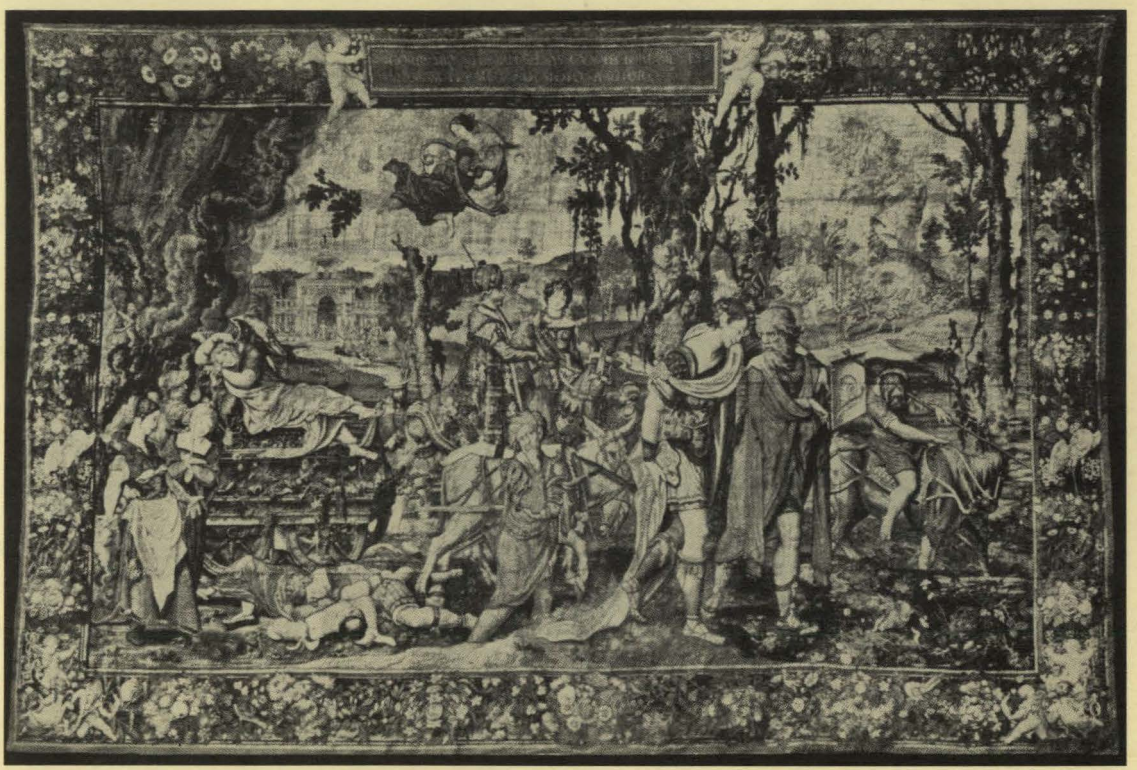
It is difficult to understand why our people have so little confidence in our business men, who have developed the supplies of food, housing, comforts and conveniences way beyond those of any other country, and on the other hand place so much confidence in our politicians and government officials when they have before them daily such outstanding bad practices in the political and governmental activities.

The present countries in which business is controlled and regulated by the government should be an outstanding example to us of why we should not encourage the movement for greater government control of enterprise. Because of the fact that the recent breakdown of our economic activities brought out some of the weaknesses and faults of our free enterprise system, many of our people are inclined to support the soapbox orators and impractical economists, who propose plans for a system that will eliminate all the faults of our present system.

If the public were better informed on the advantages of a free enterprise system it would also reduce the desire on the part of many to "burn down the barn to get the rats."

If we consider the bad practices perpetrated by members of other professions, such as medicine, religion, the press, etc., we would all be asking for greater governmental regulation to a point where the honest members of these professions would have difficulty in serving the public to the best of their ability, the same as many honest business men are now experiencing because of impractical governmental regulations.

At the present time it seems to me we are suffering from the weakness common in most of us, that it is easier to expound than it is to demonstrate, and that we are more skilled



Das Kirchliche Kunstgewerbe der Neuzeit

A Gobelin from the XVI Century representing "Idleness" —one of the Seven Deadly Sins. It was executed in Brussels and was one of the treasured possessions of the Royal Palace in Madrid. Its fate, since the war, is unknown.

Das Kirchliche Kunstgewerbe der Neuzeit

"Adam and Eve after the Fall" is the subject for this later tapestry (1628) which is part of the treasure of Salzburg Cathedral. It was executed in Brussels by Jean Aerts.

as advocates than we are as administrators. What we need right now, in addition to a greater spiritual awakening, which would bring about greater honesty in all of our dealings, is more honest enterprisers who will create useful work for the unemployed, and less interference by government regulations which are difficult to enforce, due again to the same weakness in our administrators which is manifest in all walks of life.

JOHN A. SAUERMAN

Chicago, Illinois

What Did Goethe Say?

SIR:

It is hard to understand why every once in a while, now also in THE CRESSET, that age worn historical inaccuracy pops up about Goethe's desire for more light, allegedly uttered in the hour of his death. Goethe at that time never said: *"Licht, mehr Licht!"* ("Light, more light!"). What really did happen was this: Goethe, an old man, suffering from the frailties of advanced age, sat in his easy chair, most probably not assuming that death was so near, and called for his servant, and said: *"Johann, mach 'mal den linken Fensterfluegel auf, dass mehr Licht 'rein kommt!"* And a few minutes after he had said that, death overtook him. So it was the light of the physical day that he desired, and not spiritual light, as THE CRESSET seems to imply.

H. F. R. STECHHOLZ

Manchester, Connecticut

[*Our gratitude to our learned correspondent. We should have made it clear that we understood the famous phrase in the physical sense. That makes it all the more tragic.*—ED.]

Propaganda Considered

SIR:

I have been a reader of THE CRESSET since its beginning, and an enthusiastic reader. There are times when we do not agree, but that is not to your discredit.

The March issue reached me today. I read the letter by E. Sinclair Hertel of Bronxville, New York. I should like to advise the gentleman from Bronxville to gather up all the courage he possesses and read, *Propaganda For War, the Campaign Against American Neutrality, 1914-1917*. It will take courage for him to read it! (The book is by H. C. Peterson.) Residing in Bronxville, New York, Mr. Hertel may learn that Mr. Peterson's book clearly shows the difference of opinion current in the East and West and he may learn that America is greater than New York.

Anyone who has read Mr. Peterson's book and reads the daily papers can clearly see that the same machine is functioning again. What America needs is a portion of American patriotism and less concern about the British Navy.

G. E. MELCHERT

Waterloo, Iowa

Old Books

SIR:

Even though your magazine is dedicated to current thought, wouldn't it be possible to digress just a few

inches of type in every issue and include just *one* book review of an old, old book that has escaped oblivion? I think the reviews of the current books are excellent, but since reading time is limited and I can't hope to read all of the modern things, it would be a mild satisfaction to read something that has made the grade for years and years. If the recent books need culling and attention drawn to them or away from them, why can't some of the worthwhile books of the past be called to the attention of CRESSET readers?

ESTHER A. HARTMANN

Seymour, Indiana

A Star-gazing Reviewer

SIR:

Your reviewers, so far as I am able to check up on them, almost always know their stuff and are at home in the matters with which they deal. I am afraid, however, that I must register an exception for the one who reviewed "The Star-Gazer" in the March issue. Isn't he rather innocent of astronomical information? He writes, "Galileo knew that the sun had to remain stationary, that no reasonable astronomical computation could be made unless one assumed the earth revolved about the sun." Isn't it, on the contrary, true that all computations made until that time, or that Galileo could make, were made just as correctly on the one assumption as on the other? Again he writes, "The first apparent flaw which Galileo discovered in Aristotle was the discovery of a new star in the Mars-Jupiter axis." Does the reviewer connect any definite idea with "the Mars-Jupiter axis" (or does he merely use the expression because it sounds learned)? Does he regard it as a permanent line of reference? If he is aware that it is not—then what sense does it make in his review?—any more than if he had said, "He discovered a new star to the left of the moon"? The gentleman, it seems, was out of his depth.

LLOYD WARNER

Buffalo, New York

Amplification

SIR:

Prov. 29:18, is too often misquoted as applying to the subjective dreamings of religious or secular enthusiasts. In crystallizing his opinion as to Streit's utopian *Union Now* (April CRESSET, page 46 ff.), your reviewer is hardly convinced of the practicability of the author's plan to make the world a better, a more secure place in which to live. But he is sufficiently impressed to come to the conclusion that "Streit's ambitious program, aimed at the furtherance of mankind's good, is at least a vision. And where there is no vision, the people perish."

Now, let's get this straight again. "Where there is no vision," i.e., where there is no sacred vision, or instruction in God's truth, which was by prophets, through visions (cp. e.g. I Sam. 3:1): there "the people perish"; that is, having been stripped of their real armor (cp. marginal reading), they are destroyed for lack of knowledge. (Cp. Hos. 4:6) The contrast, in the same verse, serves to make all of this plain: "But he that keepeth the

Law, happy is he." It all comes to somewhat the same thing as what Solomon says in Prov. 1:7: "The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge." Let's not have such a precious truth watered down to where it becomes a predication regarding mere social dreamers.

PAUL H. BURGDORF
Red Lake Falls, Minnesota

[*The reviewer was fully conscious of the original meaning of the passage. In using this phrase he was not quoting Scripture, but was employing the phrase in an axiomatic sense, expressing a general truth which by virtue of long usage has become a part of our common heritage.*—ED.]

German Colonies

SIR:

Having studied the "Standard Encyclopedia" as the writer of "A little History" advised, we cannot withhold the information we have gained. Once more the German colonies are in the head-lines. These lines have been taken from an article dealing with the war in the former German colonies. ". . . in one instance hostilities continued up to the Armistice." About Cameroon we read: ". . . the process of driving out the German forces and occupying the country was long drawn out . . . and the Germans fled into Spanish Muni and were interned in *1916* (not "early in 1915"). We continue to quote: "A most gallant fight was maintained in German East Africa, under the leadership of General von Lettow Vorbeck, his troops preserving their martial qualities *through four years* of unceasing tropical warfare; entirely without resources other than those that could be obtained by force from their opponents!" Three hundred thousand soldiers of the Allies under one hundred and thirty generals were fighting the three and a half thousand German soldiers and the sixteen and a half thousand natives. England admits that this campaign devoured more than twelve billion. "A special clause in the armistice terms provided for the honorable capitulation of von Lettow Vorbeck three days after hostilities had ceased in Europe (not "in the dark night of November, 1917!").

Let us be just as fair as the soldiers in the trenches, the aviators in the air, the sailors on the seas. A hero is a hero whether German, French or English.

The Germans were neither more nor less hated in their colonies than the French or the English. Why did Cameroon send a delegation to Geneva asking that their land be returned to Germany? Do the colonies of the other empires enjoy the yoke of their "cultured protectors"? What about the conditions in the West Indies? It is claimed that America does not want them from England. What about India? Does it enjoy being a part of England? Will India ever forget Delhi? It was in 1857. But it was utterly cruel. And a nation with self-respect will never forget.

BERTHOLD F. KORTE
Bellwood, Illinois

Contributors—Problems—Final Notes

The Editor's Lamp

OUR major article this month (The Motion Picture) is the first in a series of two presented by one of our motion picture reviewers. Since the inauguration of the reviews in THE CRESSET the column has been conducted by a group of volunteers. One of them has now given the matter sufficient thought to present his reactions and opinions in the articles which we present in this issue and in June.

Our correspondence reveals the fact that a frank discussion of the problem of the motion picture is both timely and necessary. Apparently some of our readers still feel that it probably would be advisable not to review them at all. We shall be very happy to print a careful presentation of the case for not reviewing the motion picture. Meanwhile the difficulties to which the writer of the article in this issue refers will undoubtedly be of interest to our readers.

Our guest reviewer this month is Anne Hansen *(The Morning is Near Us)*, the wife of our erudite music critic and a student of modern literature in her own right.

The number of unsolicited manuscripts reaching our desk is increasing. We repeat that we are happy to receive them and that they are given careful consideration by the editorial board. Since they are read by a number of our associates, it is at times impossible to return them just as promptly as our contributors desire, or to prepare them for publication as quickly as we should like. We therefore bespeak patience of the writers who have permitted us to examine their work.

We are happy to note that the *Atlantic Monthly,* dowager of American journals, has introduced anonymous book reviews by a special staff. It encourages us to believe that THE CRESSET policy of anonymous book reviews will become increasingly prevalent in America.

FORTHCOMING ISSUES

I. In "Notes and Comment" the editors will continue their brief comments on the world of public affairs and modern thought.

II. Major articles during the coming months will include:

THE MOTION PICTURE II
DIVORCE
EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

III. In future issues the editions will review, among many others, the following books:

FAILURE OF A MISSION.....*Sir Neville Henderson*
GUSTAV ADOLF—THE GREAT.....*Nils Ahnlund*
WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOR.....*Neil MacNeil*
MEN AGAINST MADNESS.....*Lowell S. Selling*
WILD GEESE CALLING.....*Stewart Edward White*
GANG RULE IN NEW YORK.....*Craig Thompson, Allen Raymond*
DON'T YOU CRY FOR ME.....*John Weld*
THE AMERICAN STAKES.....*John Chamberlain*
CITIZENS.....*Meyer Levin*
AMERICAN FAITH.....*Ernest Sutherland Bates*
MR. SKEFFINGTON.....*Elizabeth*
HEIL HUNGER!.....*Martin Gumpert*
COMPETITION FOR EMPIRE.....*Walter L. Dorn*
BENJAMIN N. CARDOZO.....*Geo. S. Hellman*
THE GOOD OLD DAYS.....*David L. Cohn*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